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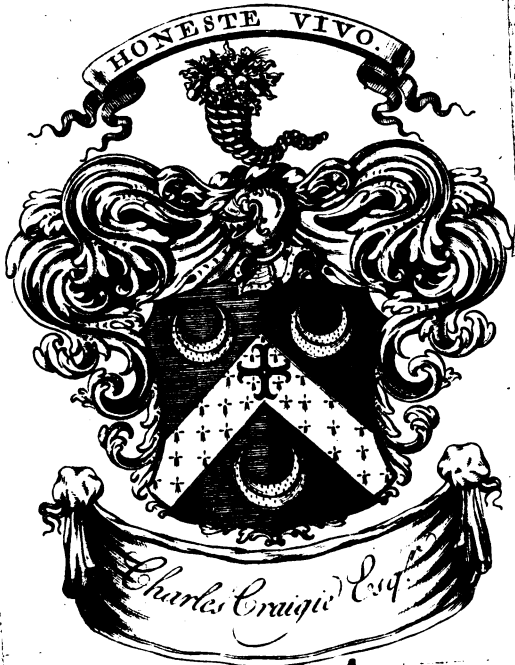
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Charles Craigie Esq.







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THE
HISTORY
OF
Miss *Betsy Thoughtless.*
VOL. II.



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T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
M I S S B E T S Y T H O U G H T L E S S .

C H A P . I .

Will satisfy the reader's curiosity in some points, and increase it in others.



THOUGH Mr. Goodman, under whose care, and in whose house, Miss Betsy had been for upwards of a year, knew much more of that young lady's humour and disposition, than Mr. Chatfree, who saw her but seldom, could possibly do, and could not be brought to think as he did, that the merits of Mr. Truworth

2 *The* HISTORY *of*

had made any effectual impresson on his heart ; yet he imagined, that to propagate such an opinion in mr. Staple would conduce very much to persuade him to break off his courtship, which was a thing very much desired by mr. Goodman, as he was certain the continuance of it would be attended with almost insurmountable difficulties, and create many vexations and disputes, when mr. Francis Thoughtful came to town.

The two old gentlemen went on together, discoursing on this affair, 'till they came to the lodgings of mr. Staple, where they found him sitting in an easy chair leaning on a table, with papers and a standish before him ; — they perceived he had been writing, for the pen was out of his hand when they entered the room : — he threw it down, however, soon as he saw them, and rose to receive them with a great deal of politeness though accompanied with an air, which in spite of his endeavours to conceal discovered he laboured under an extraordinary dejection of spirits.

“ I am glad,” said mr. Chatfree, pointing to the pen, “ to see you are able to make use of that weapon, as I fear your arm had been too much prejudi-
“

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 3

“ by another.” — “ I have found some
“ difficulty, indeed, in doing it,” replied
the wounded gentleman; “ but some-
“ thing, which seemed to me a case of
“ necessity, obliged me to exert my ut-
“ most efforts for that purpose.”

After the first civilities were over, and they were all seated, mr. Goodman and mr. Chatfree began to open the business upon which they came; — mr. Goodman represented to him, in the most pathetic terms, the deep concern he had been in, for having ever encouraged his addresses to miss Betsy, and excused himself for having done so, by his ignorance, at that time, that mr. Truworth had been previously recommended by her brother; — he then gave him some hints, that the civilities miss Betsy had treated him with, he feared, were rather owing to that little vanity, which is generally the companion of youth and beauty, than to that real regard, which his passion and person merited from her, and said, he heartily wished to see him withdraw his affections from an object, where he could not now flatter him with the least hope of a suitable return.

“ No, no,” cried mr. Chatfree, interrupting him hastily, “ you may take my
B 2 “ word,

4 *The* HISTORY of

“ word, she is as much in love, as a girl
“ of her temper can be, with mr. True-
“ worth, and I do not doubt but you
“ will all see the effects of it, as soon as
“ her brother comes to town.” — Mr.
Goodman, on this, took an opportunity
of telling mr. Staple, that the ascendant
that young gentleman had over his sister,
and the zeal he expressed for the interest
of his friend, would certainly go a great
way in determining the point ; and added,
that if it were true, as his friend suggest-
ed, that she had really an inclination for
mr. Truworth, she would then avow it,
and make a merit of it to her brother,
as if done merely in regard to him.

Many other arguments were urged by
these two gentlemen, in order to convince
mr. Staple of the little probability there
was of succeeding with miss Betsy, all
which he listened to attentively, never
interrupting what either of them said,
'till perceiving they had ended all they
had to offer on the subject, he made them
this reply,

“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ I am infi-
“ nitely obliged to you both for this vi-
“ sit, and the friendly purpose of it,
“ which, I perceive, was to give me that
“ advice,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. §

“ advice, which you might reasonably
“ think I wanted. — I have heard, and
“ I believe have not lost one word, at
“ least, I am sure no part of the mean-
“ ing of what you have delivered: — I
“ own there is great justice in every thing
“ you have alledged, and am pleased to
“ think the arguments you bring are
“ such, as, before your coming here, I
“ had myself brought against the folly of
“ my own unhappy passion for miss Betsy;
“ but, gentlemen, it is not that I am
“ capable of being deterred from prose-
“ cuting it, by any thing I might have
“ to apprehend, either to her own incli-
“ nations, or her brother’s persuasions,
“ but for other reasons, which, at present,
“ perhaps, you may be ignorant of, yet
“ are such, as to conceal I should but half
“ be just. — Be pleased, sir,” continued
he, addressing himself to mr. Goodman,
and giving him a paper, “ to read that
“ letter, and see what my resolutions
“ are, and the motives I have for them.”

Mr. Goodman was beginning to look over the paper, but mr. Staple requested he would read it aloud, as he desired that mr. Chatfree should be partaker of the contents; on which he read, with an audible voice, these lines:

6 *The HISTORY of*

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

“ *Sir,*

“ **W**HEN I propos'd the decision of
“ our fate by force of arms, I of-
“ fered, at the same time, that the glory
“ of serving miss Betsy should be the
“ victor's triumph. — This your too great
“ modesty declined; — but, sir, though
“ you scorn'd to accept the advantage
“ your superior skill acquired, your ge-
“ nerosity, in spite of you, has gain'd.
“ — I lov'd miss Betsy, and would have
“ maintain'd my claim against all who
“ should have dar'd to dispute her with
“ me, while justice, and while honour
“ permitted me to do so; but though I
“ am unfortunate, I never can be base.—
“ My life, worthless as it is, has twice
“ been in your power, and I should be
“ no less hateful to myself, than con-
“ temptible to the world, should I offer
“ to interrupt the peace of him that gave
“ it. — May you be as successful in love
“ as you have been in fight, and the
“ amiable object be convinc'd of her own
“ happiness in making yours. — I desist
“ forever from the vain hopes I once
“ was flatter'd with, and the first Wish
“ my soul now harbours, is to be worthy
“ the

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 7

“ the title of your friend, as I am bound
“ to avow myself,

“ With the greatest sincerity,

“ SIR,

“ Your most obliged,

“ And most humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

“ Nothing,” said mr. Goodman, as soon as he had done reading, “ can equal
“ your generosity, in forming this reso-
“ lution, but the wisdom in persisting in
“ it; and if I find you do so, shall have
“ more reason to congratulate you upon
“ it, than I should think I had on the
“ success of your wishes in marrying miss
“ Betsy.”

“ I should laugh now,” cried mr. Chat-
free, “ if mr. Truworth, in a fit of ge-
“ nerosity too, should also take it into
“ his head to resign his pretensions, and
“ choose to wear the willow, instead of
“ the myrtle garland, because you do
“ so.” — “ He has already proved his
“ generosity,” replied mr. Staple with a
sigh, which he was unable to restrain,
“ and has no need to give the severe
“ testi-

8 *The* HISTORY *of*

“ testimony you mention, if he is so
“ happy as you seem to think he is; —
“ but,” continued he, “ it is not my
“ business to examine who yields, or who
“ pursues miss Betsy, — I am fixed in
“ my determination of seeing her no more,
“ and as soon as I am recovered from the
“ hurts I have received on her account,
“ will go into the country, and seek a cure
“ in absence for my unavailing passion.”

Neither mr. Goodman, nor mr. Chatfree, were so old as to have forgot how hard it is for a youthful heart to give up its darling wishes, and sacrifice desire to discretion. — They said abundance of handsome things, omitted nothing which they imagined might add to the fortitude of his present way of thinking. He, on the other hand, to take from them all remains of doubt, concerning the sincerity of his intentions, sealed the letter he had wrote to mr. Truworth, and sent it to that gentleman, while they were in the room.

Mr. Goodman was extremely pleased in his mind, that an affair, which, for some time past, had given him a good deal of anxiety, was in so fair a way of being ended, without further mischief: — he took no notice, however, on his re-
turn

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 9

turn home, at least not before miss Betsy, of the visit he had been making, or that he knew any thing more of mr. Staple, than what she had been told herself by mr. Chatfree.

In the mean time, this young lady affected to appear more grave than ordinary:— I say, affected to be so; for as she had been at first shocked by mr. Chatfree's report, and afterwards teized by his raillery, and then reprimanded, on the score of her conduct, by mr. Goodman, she was not displeas'd in her heart at the dangerous proof, which the two lovers had given of their passion.

She lost, however, great part of the satisfaction this adventure might have afforded her, for want of a proper person to whom she might have talked freely on it.— She had, indeed, many acquaintance, in some of whom she, doubtless, might have confided; but she did not choose to be herself the reporter of this story to any one, who had not heard of it from other hands; and miss Flora, who knew the whole, and was her companion and bedfellow, was grown of late so fullen and peevish, as not to be capable of either giving or receiving any diversion in discourses of that nature.

It is certain, that there never was a more astonishing alteration in the temper of any one person in so short a time, than in that of miss Flora: — her once gay and spirituous behaviour, which, without being a beauty, rendered her extremely agreeable, was now become all dull and gloomy. — Instead of being fond of a great deal of company, she now rather chose to avoid than covet the society of any one; — she said but little, and when she spoke, it was only to contradict whatever she heard alledged by others; — a heavy melancholly, mixed with an ill-natured frown, perpetually lowered upon her brow: — in fine, if she had been a little older, she might have sat for the picture of Envy. — Miss Betsy, by being most with her, felt most the effects of her bad humour; but as she thought she could easily account for it, the sweetness of her disposition made her rather pity than resent the change.

A young linnen-draper, of whom lady Mellasin some times bought things, had taken a great fancy to miss Flora, and not doubting but she had a fortune in some measure answerable to the appearance she made, got a friend to intercede with lady Mellasin, for leave to pay his respects
to

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 11

to her daughter: — this being granted, he made several visits at the house, and was very well received by miss Flora herself, as well as by those who had the disposal of her, 'till coming on the topic of fortune, mr. Goodman plainly told him, that having many relations of his own to provide for, the most he could spare to miss Flora was five hundred pounds. — The draper's passion was very much damped, on hearing his mistress's portion was like to be so small; — he told mr. Goodman, that though he was very much charmed with the person and behaviour of the young lady, and should be proud of the honour of an alliance with such a family, yet as he was a young man, and but lately set up for himself, he wanted money to throw into trade, and could not think of marrying without more than three times the sum offered; — he added, that a young lady of her birth, and bringing-up, would expect to live as she had been accustomed; which he could no way promise she should do, without a fortune sufficient to defray the expence.

Mr. Goodman thought the reasons he gave were very just, and as he was unwilling to stretch his hand any farther than he had said, and was too honest to

promise more than he intended to perform, replied with the same freedom that the other had spoke, that in truth he did not think Flora would make a fit wife for a tradesman; — that the girl was young enough, not ugly, and it was his opinion that she should wait till a more suitable match should offer. In a word, mr. Goodman's answer put a final end to the courtship, and though miss Flora affected to disdain the mercenary views, as she termed them, of the draper, and never spoke of him but with the utmost contempt, yet her melancholly coming on soon after he had desisted his addresses, made miss Betsy think she had reason to impute it to no other cause; and therefore, in mere compassion to this imaginary mortification, was so far from retorting any of those little taunts, and malicious inuendo's, with which she was continually treated by the other, that she took all the pains she could to alleviate the vexation she saw her in, and sooth her into a better humour.

The reader will probably think as miss Betsy did, but the falsity of this conjecture, and the cruel return the good-nature of that young lady met with, will in due time and place appear.

CHAP. II.

Contains some passages, which, perhaps, may be looked upon as pretty extraordinary.

ACCORDING to the common rule of honour among gentlemen, mr. Truworth had certainly behaved so, as not to have either that, or his good-nature, called in question; but this was not enough to satisfy him: — he could not be easy under the reflection, that the obligations he had conferred gave a painful gratitude to the receiver.

He was deeply affected with mr. Staple's letter; — he doubted not but that gentleman in forcing himself to resign his pretensions to miss Betsy, must suffer the extreme agonies; and heartily commiserating a case, which, had fortune so decreed, might have been his own, immediately wrote to him in the following terms:

To

TO T. STAPLE, Esq;

“ *Sir,*

“ I AM ashamed to find the little I
“ have done so much over-rated, by
“ a person, who, I am certain, is capable
“ of the greatest things; but should be
“ involved in more confusion still, should
“ any consideration of me, or my happi-
“ ness, prevail on you to become an ene-
“ my to your own. — I am altogether
“ unacquainted with what kind of senti-
“ ments either of us is regarded by the
“ fair object of our mutual wishes. —
“ It is highly probable, her young heart
“ may, as yet, be quite insensible of those
“ we have endeavoured to inspire it with;
“ — for my own part, as I have yet no
“ reason to despair, so I have had also
“ but little room for hope. — You, sir,
“ have an equal chance, for any thing I
“ know, or can boast of to the contrary,
“ and as you saw I refused to hazard my
“ pretensions on the point of the sword,
“ neither justice, nor honour, requires
“ you should forfeit yours, though an
“ accident gave me the advantage of you
“ in the field. — 'Tis by miss Betsey her-
“ self our fate is to be judged. — 'Tis
“ yet a moot-point whether either will
“ succeed in the attempt of pleasing her.

“ We

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 15

“ We may, perhaps, contend for an airy
“ expectation, while another more fortu-
“ nate shall bear away the prize from
“ both ; but if one of us is decreed to
“ be the happy man, on which soever the
“ lot shall fall, he ought not to incur the
“ hatred of the other.

“ I gladly embrace the offer of your
“ friendship, and whatever is the for-
“ tune of our love, should in that, as in
“ all other eyents, endeavour to prove,
“ that I am,

“ With an equal sincerity,

“ SIR,

“ Your very much obliged,

“ And most humble servant,

“ C. TRUEWORTH.”

Mr. Staple read this letter many times over, but received not all the satisfaction, which the author intended it should give him, although he acknowledged the generosity of his rival, yet he could not conceive there was a possibility for a man in love to be easy under the addresses of another, without knowing himself secure of not being prejudiced by them : — he, there-

therefore, concluded that mr. Chatfree was right in his conjecture, and that miss Betsy only waited for her brother's coming to town to declare in favour of mr. Truworth.

This gentleman had a great share of spirit, and some pride, and these making him disdain to pursue a fruitless aim, and suffering himself to be publicly overcome by mr. Truworth in love, as he had been in fight, very much contributed to enable him to keep that resolution he had formed in the presence of mr. Goodman and mr. Chatfree.

He answered mr. Truworth's letter, however, with the utmost complaisance, but without letting him know any part of his intentions, in relation to miss Betsy, fearing least any farther contest on this affair might draw from that gentleman fresh proofs of a generosity, to which, already, he looked upon himself as too much obliged.

Miss Betsy little suspecting what had passed between her two lovers, since their meeting in the Green-park, received mr. Truworth, when he came to visit her the same day, as usual, with a great deal of good humour. — She took not any notice

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 17

ce that she had heard of the duel, imagining, that he would himself inform her of it, and he not thinking it would become him to do so, as having had the advantage of his rival, 'tis probable there would have been no mention made of it, if lady Mellafin had not come into the room, and told him, that she would not have broke in upon his conversation with miss Betsy, if it had been possible for her to have resisted the pleasure of congratulating him, not only on his safety, but also on his coming off victor in the field of battle.

The modesty of mr. Truworth would not suffer him to hear these last words without blushing; but soon recovering himself, "Fortune, madam," answered he, "is not always the most favourable
"to the most deserving: — her partial
"smiles will never make me vain, or
"happy, unless," continued he, looking tenderly on miss Betsy, "she would add
"to her indulgence here, and give me
"room to hope, my services to this lady
"might one day be crowned with the
"same success, as she this morning gave
"my sword." — "The one," said miss Betsy, smiling, "has nothing to do with
"the other, and I do not know how to
"think a man, who really wishes nothing
"so

“ so much as to appear agreeable in the
“ eyes of his mistress, would run the
“ hazard of making the contemptible fig-
“ gure of a culprit at the bar of a court
“ of judicature.”

They then fell into some discourse on duelling, and mr. Truworth could not help joining with the ladies, in condemning the folly of that custom, which, contrary to the known laws of the land, and oftentimes contrary to his own reason too, obliges the gentleman either to obey the call of the person who challenges him, to the field, or, by refusing, submit himself not only to all the insults his adversary is pleased to treat him with, but also to be branded with the infamous character of a coward, by all that know him.

Nothing material enough to be related, happened in this visit, except that miss Flora, who had been abroad when mr. Truworth came, and returned home a small time before he went away, talked much more in half an hour, than she had done for some whole days past; but it was in so odd a manner, sometimes praising, sometimes blaming his conduct, in regard to the transactions of that morning, that he could not well determine in his mind, whether

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 19

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whether she was a friend, or an enemy to the success of his passion. — Miss Betsy herself was a little surprized, but nothing relating to that young lady dwelt much upon her mind, as she really thought she had no design in any thing she said or did. — The behaviour of Mr. Staple ran much more in her head; she knew he was pretty much wounded, and therefore might suppose him unable to wait on her in person, but having expected he would send his compliments to her, either by letter or message, and finding he did neither the whole day, it seemed to her a thing too strange to be accounted for:— she was, however, eased of the suspense we was in, on that score, by receiving from him, as she was at breakfast the next morning, the following epistle :

TO *Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.*

“ *Madam,*

“ **A** Brother’s recommendation, superior
“ merit, and your own inclination,
“ have all united to plead my rival’s
“ cause, and gain the verdict against un-
“ happy me! — I ought more early to
“ have seen the vanity of attempting to
“ succeed, where Mr. Truworth was the
“ candidate; yet hurried by the violence
“ of my passion, I rushed into an action,
“ which,

“ which, by adding to his glory, **h**
 “ shewn my demerits in a more **co**
 “ spicuous light than ever.

“ It would be needless to repeat what
 “ happened yesterday; I cannot doubt,
 “ madam, but you are well acquaint-
 “ ed with all the particulars of my folly,
 “ and the just punishment it met with.
 “ — I have only to say the generosity of
 “ my rival, and my conqueror, has re-
 “ stored me to my lost reason, and con-
 “ vinced me, that whatever preference he
 “ may be so happy as to have gained in
 “ your esteem, he is indebted for it to the
 “ excellence of your good sense, and not
 “ that partial fancy which frequently mis-
 “ guides the choice of persons of your
 “ sex and age.

“ I would have waited on you in per-
 “ son to take my everlasting leave, but
 “ am not certain how far I ought to
 “ depend on the strength of my resolu-
 “ tion in your presence. — Permit, there-
 “ fore, my pen to do that which my
 “ tongue would falter in performing.
 “ — Yes, madam, I must forego, re-
 “ nounce forever those glorious expecta-
 “ tions with which so lately I flattered
 “ my fond heart; — henceforth must
 “ think on you as the fallen father of
 “ man-

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 21

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“ mankind did on the tree of life: —
“ the merits of my too accomplished ri-
“ val are the flaming swords which drive
“ me from my once hoped-for paradise,
“ and while I mourn my unhappy fate,
“ compels me to own it to be just. —
“ Farewell, O most amiable of your sex!
“ Farewell forever! — I have troubled
“ you too long, and have no excuse to
“ make, but that it is the last you will
“ receive from me. — May the blest guar-
“ dians of the fair and good be your
“ constant directors, and shield you from
“ all ills. — Be assured that till I cease
“ to exist, I shall not cease to be,

“ With the sincerest good wishes,

“ MADAM,

“ Your most faithful,

“ Though unfortunate, humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

Miss Betsy was astonished to that de-
gree, on reading so unexpected a declara-
tion, that she could scarce believe she was
awake for some moments, and thought it
all a dream; — she broke off, and made
several pauses in the reading, crying out,

“ Good

“ Good God! — Is it possible? — What
 “ does the man mean? — How came
 “ such stuff into his head? — He is mad,
 “ sure!”

Mr. Goodman, who had some notion of what had put her into this ferment, and was willing to be more confirmed, asked her, in a pleasant way, what had occasioned it? — “ Indeed, sir,” replied miss Betsy, endeavouring to compose herself, “ I have been so confounded, that
 “ I knew not where I was, or who was
 “ in the room. — I ask your pardon, —
 “ but this, I hope, will plead my ex-
 “ cuse,” continued she, throwing the let-
 “ ter on the table, “ your friend has gi-
 “ ven over his suit to me, which I am
 “ very glad of; but the motives, which
 “ he pretends oblige him to it, are so
 “ odd and capricious, as not to be ac-
 “ counted for.”

“ Given over his suit,” cried lady Mel-
 lasin, hastily; — “ O! pray, let us hear
 “ on what pretence?” — On which Mr.
 Goodman read the letter aloud, the very
 répétition of which renewed miss Betsy’s
 agitations. — “ He has acted,” said Mr.
 Goodman, as soon as he had done read-
 ing, “ like a man of sense and resolution
 “ and I see no cause why you should be
 “ disconcerted

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 23

“disconcerted at the loss of a lover,
“whose pretensions you did not design
“to favour.” — “He was very hasty,
“however,” cried miss Betsy, scornfully,
“in concluding for me. — What did the
“man think I was to be won at once?
“Did he imagine his merits were so ex-
“traordinary, that there required no
“more to obtain, than barely to ask?
“but I give myself no concern on that
“score, I assure you, sir; — it is the in-
“solence of his accusing me of being in
“love that vexes me. — Who told him,
“I wonder! — or, how came such a
“a thing into his head, that mr. True-
“worth had the preference in my esteem?
“— By the manner in which he speaks
“of him in this letter, he has found
“more perfections in him, than ever I
“did, and would make one think he
“were himself enamoured of his rival’s
“merits.”

In answer to all this, he told her with
a serious air, that mr. Staple was bound
by all those ties, which engage a noble
mind, to act in the manner he had done,
— that he had been twice indebted to
mr. Truworth for his life, and that the
whole behaviour of that gentleman to-
wards him, both during the combat, and
after

after it was over, demanded all the return that gratitude could pay.

He afterwards run into a detail of the particulars of what had passed between the two rivals, many of which the ladies were ignorant of before. — Lady Mella joined with her husband, in extolling the greatness of soul, which Mr. Trueworth had shewn on this occasion; but Miss Flora said little, and what she did rather in praise of Mr. Staple. — “I think Mr. Trueworth,” cried she, “is a fine gentleman enough, but has done no more than what any man of honour would do; and, for my part, I think that Mr. Staple, in putting the self-denial he has now shewn in practice, discovers more of the hero and philosopher, than the other has done.”

The conversation, on this topic, lasted some time, and probably would have broke off so soon, if it had not been interrupted by two young ladies coming in to ask Miss Betsy and Miss Flora if they were not for the park that morning? which they having agreed, and promised to call on them in their way, went into their chamber, in order to prepare themselves for the walk proposed.

CHAP. III.

Discovers to miss Betsy a piece of treachery she little expected to hear of.

MISS Flora, who had been deterred from saying all she had a mind to do, on the affair between miss Betsy's two lovers, now took this opportunity of giving her tongue all the latitude it wanted. They were no sooner come into the chamber, than, "Lord, my dear," cried she, with a tone vastly different from that, in which she had spoke to her of late, "how vexed am I for you! — It will certainly go all about the town, that you are in love with Truworth, and there will be such cabals, and such whispering about it, that you will be plagued to death: — I could tear him to pieces, methinks; for I am sure he is a vain fellow, and the hint must first come from himself."

"I never saw any think like vanity in him," replied miss Betsy, "and I am rather inclined to believe mr. Staple got the notion from the idle rattle of
You II. C " mr.

“ mr. Chatfree.” — “ Mr. Chatfree,” said miss Flora, “ thought of no such thing
“ himself, ’till he had been at the tavern
“ with mr. Truworth ; but if I was in
“ your place, I would convince mr. Staple
“ and the world, that I was not capable
“ of the weakness imputed to me.”

“ Why, what would you have me do ?”
cried miss Betsy. — “ I would have you
“ write to mr. Staple,” answered the
other, “ and let him know the deception
“ his rival has put upon him.” — Miss
Betsy, who had always an aversion to any
thing of this kind, and thought it too
great a condescension to write on any
score to a man, who had pretended love
to her, shook her head at this proposal,
and exclaimed against it with the utmost
vehemence,

Miss Flora made use of all the argu-
ments she could think on, to bring her
off, from what she called so ill-judged a
pride ; — among other things, she told
her, that in compassion to the despair that
gentleman had so feelingly expressed in
his letter, she ought to give him the con-
solation of knowing, that if he had not
gained so far on her affections as he wish-
ed, it was not because his rival had gained
more ; and added, that the step she per-
swaded

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 27

swaded her to take, was such, as common justice to her own character had a right to exact from her.

Miss Betsy heard, but was not to be prevailed upon by all she could say on this subject; but the other, who had a greater share of artifice, than, perhaps, was ever known in one of her years, would not give over the design she had formed in her head, and perceiving that the writing to a man was the greatest objection miss Betsy had to letting mr. Staple know she was not so much attached to his rival, as he imagined, took another way of working her to her purpose, which she thought would be less irksome.

“ Well then, my dear miss Betsy,” said she, in the most flattering accent, “ I will tell you the only method you can take, and I am glad I have been so lucky to hit upon it: — you shall let me go, and make mr. Staple a visit as of my own accord; — I shall take care not to drop a syllable that may give him room to think you know of my coming; but yet as he may suppose I am enough in your secrets to be mistress of this, or, at least, not altogether a stranger to it, he will, doubtless, say something to me concerning

“ the matter ; but if he should not, it
“ will be easy for me, in the way of dis-
“ course, and as it were by chance, to
“ express myself in such terms as will
“ entirely clear you, and rid him of all
“ the apprehensions he is under, of your
“ being in love with mr. Truworth.”

Miss Betsy was not in her heart at all averse to mr. Staple's having that eclairsifement miss Flora had mentioned, and was much less shocked at this proposal, than she had been at the former, offered to her consideration for that purpose ; yet did not seem to come into it, till the other had lavished all the arguments that woman, witty and willful to obtain her ends, could urge to prevail on her to do so ; and at last consented not to the execution, without exacting from miss Flora the most solemn vow of an inviolable secrecy.

This project being concluded on, and every thing relating to it settled while they were dressing, they went together according to their promise to the ladies who expected them, and then accompanied them into the park ; — but as if this was to be a day of surprises to miss Betsy, she here met with something which gave her, at least, an equal share with that
she

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 29

she had received from the letter of mr. Staple.

They had not gone many yards in the Mall, before they saw three gentlemen coming towards them ; one of whom, as they drew nearer to each other, miss Betsy and miss Flora presently knew to be the son of alderman Saving, though he was grown fatter, more ruddy, and in many respects much altered from what he was when he visited at mr. Goodman's.

As our young ladies had not heard of this gentleman's return to England, it was natural for them, especially miss Betsy, after what had passed between them, to be in some little surprize at the sudden sight of him ; — he was in some confusion too ; but both parties had presence enough of mind to recover themselves, so as to salute as persons would do, who never had any thing more than an ordinary acquaintance with each other.

After the civilities common to people, who thus meet by accident, mr. Saving asked the ladies leave for himself and friends to join company ; which being readily granted, they all walked up the Mall together ; — but the place being
etty full, were obliged to divide them-
elves,

selves, and walk in couples, or as it
 happened. During this promenade, Mr.
 Saving found an opportunity of saying to
 Miss Betsy, unheard by any of the others,
 “ Madam, I have something to acquaint
 “ you with, of great consequence to your-
 “ self: — it is improper for me either to
 “ come or write to you at Mr. Good-
 “ man’s, therefore wish you would ap-
 “ point some place where I might speak
 “ to you.”

Miss Betsy was very much startled at
 his mentioning such a thing, and replied,
 — “ No,” Mr. Saving, I do not make
 “ a practice of consenting to assignations
 “ with men, nor have yet forgot that
 “ which I consented to with you. — “ I
 “ am very well able to clear myself of
 “ any fault on that score,” said he, “ but,
 “ madam, to ease you of those appre-
 “ hensions, which might, perhaps, make
 “ you think yourself obliged to keep me
 “ at a distance, it is proper to acquaint
 “ you; that I am married, and that it is
 “ only through a friendly regard for your
 “ honour and peace, that I would warn
 “ you against the perfidy of a pretended
 “ friend.” — Perceiving she started at these
 words, and repeated them two or three
 times over, “ Yes, madam,” resumed he,
 “ and if you will permit me to speak to
 “ you

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“ you in a proper place, will bring with
“ me an unquestionable proof of the truth
“ of what I say.”

One of the ladies happening to turn back to say something to *miss* Betsy, prevented him from adding further; but what he had already spoke, made a very deep impression on her mind; — she could not conceive, who the false friend should be, that he had mentioned, unless it were *miss* Flora; but though she had seen many instances of her insincerity, was not able to form any conjecture what she could have been guilty of to her, that *mr.* Saving, who had been so long absent, could possibly be made acquainted with.

Thinking, however, that she ought not to deny herself the satisfaction of the eclairecissement he offered, especially as it was now to be given, not by a lover, but a friend, she sought and found a moment before they left the Mall, of saying to him without the notice of the company,
“ Sir, I have considered on the hint you
“ gave me; — whatever concerns my
“ honour, or my peace, must certainly
“ merit my attention: — I have an ac-
“ quaintance in St. James’s palace, whom
“ I will visit as soon as dinner is over;
“ if

“ if you walk a turn or two in the gallery leading to the chapel-royal, you will see me pass that way between four and five o’clock.” — To this mr. Saving replied, that he would not fail to attend her there.

Miss Flora, who had been informed by miss Betsy, after they had parted from mr. Saving, that he was married, was very full of the news when she came home, but mr. Goodman, to whom the whole story of that affair had been related by the alderman, said, that the young gentleman had done very wisely, in complying with the commands of his father; and added, that the lady had a very agreeable person, a large fortune, and, above all, was extremely modest and discreet; so that there was no room to doubt his happiness. — There was some further discourse at table, concerning this new-wedded pair; but miss Betsy took little share in it, as giving herself no pain for the interests of a person for whom she never had any thing but the most perfect indifference.

She was, notwithstanding, impatient enough for the account she expected to receive from him, and without saying one word, either to miss Flora, or any of the family,

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 33

family, where she was going, went at the time prefixed to the place she had appointed to meet him.

Mr. Saving, to avoid being accused of want of punctuality in the affairs of friendship, as he had been in those of love, came somewhat before his time into the palace. — As she ascended the great stairs she saw him looking through one of the windows, waiting her approach, which greatly pleased her, as she would not have thought it proper to have walked there alone, nor would have been willing to have departed without the gratification of that curiosity his words had excited in her.

Excepting the time of divine service, and when the king, or any of the royal family go to chapel, few places are more retired than this gallery, none, besides the officers of the household passing on business into some of the apartments, scarce ever going into it, so that the choice miss Betsy made, in her appointment with Mr. Saving, was extremely judicious.

As the business on which they met, was of a nature very different from love and gallantry, and time was precious to them both, they needed not many compliments

pliments to usher in what Mr. Saving had to say : — he only, to excuse his behaviour to her, while he had professed himself her lover, was beginning to relate the sudden manner in which he had been forced abroad ; but she stopped him from going on, by telling him, she had heard the whole story of that affair from Mr. Goodman, to whom the alderman had made no secret of it.

“ I have only then,” said he, “ to
“ acquaint you, madam, that soon after
“ my arrival in Holland, looking over
“ some papers, that my father had put
“ into my portmanteau for my instruc-
“ tion in the business I was sent to nego-
“ ciate, I found among them a letter,
“ which, doubtless, in the hurry he was
“ in, he had shuffled with the others
“ through mistake ; — which, pray ma-
“ dam,” continued he, giving her a pa-
per, “ be pleased to peruse, and tell me
“ whether honour and justice did not ob-
“ lige me to take the first opportunity
“ of cautioning you against the baseness
“ and malice of a person, you might
“ otherwise, perhaps, confide in, on mat-
“ ters of more consequence to your peace,
“ than any thing on my account could
“ be.”

Miss

Miss Betsy had no sooner taken the paper, and looked on the superscription, which was to alderman Saving, than she cried out, with great amazement, "Bless me! — this is miss Flora's hand." — "I think," said Mr. Saving, "that I might safely venture to affirm it upon oath, having often seen her writing, and have even some of it at this instant by me, in a song she copied for me, on my first acquaintance with her; — but read, madam," pursued he, "read the wicked scroll, and see the methods she took to prevail on a father to banish from his presence, and the kingdom, an only son, and to traduce that innocence and virtue which she hated, because incapable of imitating."

On this, Miss Betsy trembling, between a mixture of surprize and anger, hastily unfolded the letter, and found in it these lines, wrote in the same hand with the superscription.

"*Sir,*
"THE real esteem I have for all persons of honesty and probity, obliges me to give you this seasonable warning of the greatest misfortune that can possibly befall a careful and a ten-
C 6 "der

“ der parent, as I know you are ; — but
 “ not to keep you in suspence, — your
 “ son, sir, — your only, — your darling
 “ son! — that son, whom you have edu-
 “ cated with so much tenderness, and
 “ who is so deservedly dear to you, is on
 “ the verge of ruin : — his unhappy ac-
 “ quaintance with mr. Goodman’s family
 “ has subjected him to the artifices of a
 “ young girl, whose little affairs are in
 “ the hands of that gentleman. — She is
 “ a great coquette, — if I had said, jilt
 “ too, I believe the injustice I should
 “ have done her character would not
 “ have been much ; but as her share,
 “ either of fortune or reputation, is very
 “ small, I cannot condemn her for put-
 “ ting in practice all the stratagems in
 “ her power of securing to herself a fu-
 “ ture settlement by marriage, — I should,
 “ sir, only be sorry that the lot should
 “ fall upon your son, as I know, and the
 “ world acknowledges him to be a gentle-
 “ man of much more promising expecta-
 “ tions. — It is, however, a thing I fear
 “ too near concluded ; — he loves her to
 “ distraction, — will venture every thing
 “ for the gratification of his passion : —
 “ She has a great deal of cunning, though
 “ little understanding in things more be-
 “ coming of her sex ; — she is gay, vain,
 “ and passionately fond of gaming, and
 “ all

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“ all the expensive diversions of the town.
“ — A shocking, and most terrible com-
“ position for a wife! yet such will she
“ very speedily be made by the poor in-
“ fatuated mr. Saving, if you, sir, in
“ your paternal wisdom do not find some
“ way to put a stop to his intentions.
“ — The original of the picture I have
“ been representing is called miss Betsy
“ Thoughtless, a name well known among
“ the gallant part of the town. I hope
“ you will take the above intelligence in
“ good part, as it is meant,

“ With the greatest sincerity, and

“ Attachment to your interests,

“ By, sir,

“ Your most humble,

“ But unknown servant,

“ A. Z.

“ P.S. Sir, your son is every day at mr.
“ Goodman's, and if you will take the
“ trouble to set a watch over him, or
“ send any person to enquire in the
“ neighbourhood, it will be easy for
“ you to satisfy yourself in the truth
“ of what I have related.”

The

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The consternation miss Betsy was in, on reading this cruel invective, was such, as for some moments deprived her from the power of speaking. — Mr. Saving could neither wonder at, nor blame so just a resentment, yet to mitigate it in part, he confessed to her a secret, which, till then, she had been wholly ignorant of.

“ Though nothing, madam,” said he, “ can excuse the crime she has been guilty of towards you, yet permit me to acquaint you, that the malice is chiefly levelled against me, and you are only wounded through my sides.”

“ How can that be?” cried she, “ she does justice to your character, while she defames mine in the most barbarous manner.” — “ Meer artifice, madam,” answered he, “ to work my father to her purpose, as I will presently convince you.”

He then told her, that before he ever had the honour of seeing her, he had treated miss Flora with some gallantries, which, said he, her vanity made her take as the addresses of a serious passion, ’till those she found I afterwards
“ ma

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“made to you, convinced her to the contrary. — This, madam,” continued he, “I am well assured of by her laying hold of every opportunity to reproach my inconstancy, as she termed it: — finding how little I regarded all she said to me on that score, and still persisted in my devoirs to you, she doubtless had recourse to this most wicked stratagem to cut me from all hope, even though it had been in my power to have inclined you to favour my suit.”

Miss Betsy found this supposition so reasonable, and so conformable to the temper of miss Flora, that she agreed with mr. Saving in it. — She did not now wonder at her wishing to be revenged on him, but could not brook with patience the method she took for being so, and said, that if mr. Goodman did not do her justice on the author of so infamous a libel, she would immediately quit his house, and chuse another guardian.

“Hold, madam,” said he, “I must intreat you will give me leave to remind you of the consequences that may possibly attend your taking such a step: — I own with you, that treachery and calumny, such as her’s, cannot be too severely exposed and punished; but,
“madam,

“ madam, consider, that in order to do
“ this, the accident which brought the
“ letter into my possession, and the op-
“ portunity you have allowed me of pre-
“ senting it to you, must be made known,
“ the latter of which you may be confi-
“ dent she would not fail to make such
“ representations of, as would not only
“ hurt me, both with my father and my
“ wife, but also furnish the malicious
“ world, too apt to judge by appearances,
“ with some pretence for casting a ble-
“ mish on your own reputation.”

These remonstrances had some part of the effect they were intended for on the mind of miss Betsy, yet having an aversion to dissimulation, and not knowing whether she could be able to conceal either her repentment or the cause of it, she cried out hastily, without considering what she said, “ Why then did you let
“ me know the injury done me, since it
“ it is improper for me to do any thing,
“ that might extort a reparation ?”

“ I could not, madam,” replied he,
“ behold you harbouring a snake in your
“ bosom without warning you of the
“ sting. — I am certain the easing you
“ of my troublesome addresses has been

“ no

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“ no cause of mortification; and it was
“ not that you should revenge what she
“ has already done, but to put you upon
“ your guard against any thing she may
“ hereafter attempt to do, that I resolved
“ to take the first opportunity of letting
“ you see what she was capable of.”

Miss Betsy was by this time fully persuaded by his arguments, but could not forbear complaining of the difficulty it would be to her to look, or speak civilly, to sleep in the same bed, or behave in any respect as she had been accustomed, towards so unworthy a creature: — she thanked him, however, for his good intentions to her, and before they parted, promised to follow his advice, if it were only, as she said, in consideration, that to act in a different manner might be a prejudice to his domestic peace.



CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

Has very little in it, besides a collection of letters, some of which are much to the purpose, others less so.

MISS Betfy, after having taken leave of mr. Saving, went to the apartment of her friend, where she stayed supper, not because she was at that time capable of being entertained, either with the elegancies of the table, or the company which happened to be pretty numerous but merely to amuse and recover herself from the shock, which the late discovery of miss Flora's infidelity had given her

On her coming home, she found the family not yet gone to bed, though it was then near one o'clock. — Mr. Goodman was in high good humour, and said to her, “ Miss Betfy you have lost for
“ hours of contentment by being abroad
“ — mr. Truworth has been here, and
“ did us the favour to pass the whole
“ evening with us ; but that is not all,
“ three letters have been left for you,
“ two of them came by the post, and
“ are, I know, by the superscription
“ from

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“ from mr. Francis Thoughtless, and
“ lady Trusty : — the other I am inform-
“ ed was left for you by a porter, but
“ your curiosity must wait for these, —
“ I have still better news for you, — your
“ eldest brother, mr. Thomas Thought-
“ less is coming home, — I have received
“ a letter from him, which tells me, he has
“ finished his tour, and we shall soon
“ have him among us. — See,” continued
he, “ what he says.”

In speaking these words, he took the letter out of his pocket, and gave her to read : — it contained these lines :

To mr. GOODMAN.

Worthy sir,

‘ I HAVE been for upwards of a month
‘ detained on a party of pleasure, at
‘ the chateau of monsieur le marquis de
‘ St. Amand, so was not so happy to re-
‘ ceive yours of the seventh, and twenty-
‘ second instant, till yesterday, when I
‘ returned to Paris. — I thank you for
‘ the long and particular account you give
‘ me of those affairs which are entrusted
‘ to your care. — As to what you tell me
‘ concerning my brother Frank’s having
‘ left the university, I am not sorry for
‘ it, nor can at all wonder, that a young
‘ fellow

‘ fellow of his mettle should be willing
 ‘ to exchange the hopes of a mitre for
 ‘ a truncheon. — I have not heard from
 ‘ him since I left Florence, but believe it
 ‘ owing to his want of knowing where to
 ‘ direct to me, my stages afterwards hav-
 ‘ ing been pretty uncertain; but finding
 ‘ by yours that he is now with sir Ralph
 ‘ Trusty, shall accompany a letter I am
 ‘ obliged to send to that gentleman, with
 ‘ one to him. — I forgive my sister’s not
 ‘ writing when you did, as you give me
 ‘ some hints she is likely soon to become
 ‘ a bride: — a matter, I confess, suffi-
 ‘ ent to engross the whole thoughts of a
 ‘ young lady; be pleased to assure her,
 ‘ of my good wishes in this, and all other
 ‘ events. — As you say she has two very
 ‘ advantageous offers, I flatter myself,
 ‘ through your good advice and inspec-
 ‘ tion, she will take the best.

‘ In my last, I mentioned somewhat of
 ‘ a design I had, to pass a few months in
 ‘ the southern parts of this kingdom; but
 ‘ I have since changed my mind, and am
 ‘ determined on returning to my native
 ‘ country with all possible expedition: —
 ‘ I believe you may expect me in three
 ‘ or four weeks at farthest. — If, sir, you
 ‘ could within that time hear of a house
 ‘ agreeably situated, for my use, I shou
 ‘ esteem

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‘ esteem it as a considerable addition to
‘ the favours of our family, and myself
‘ in particular, has received from you
‘ since the death of our dear father. — I
‘ should approve of St. James’s Square,
‘ if rents are not too exorbitant; for in
‘ that case a house in any of the adjoining
‘ streets must content me: — I would
‘ not willingly exceed an hundred, or an
‘ hundred and ten pounds per annum;
‘ but would be as near the park and palace
‘ as possible.

‘ I kiss lady Mellafin’s and her fair
‘ daughter’s hands, and am,

‘ With very great respect,

‘ SIR,

‘ Your most obliged,

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ T. THOUGHTLESS.’

Miss Betsy was very glad to find a
brother, who had now been near five
years abroad, was at last coming home,
and much more so, that he intended to
set up housekeeping in London, because,
as doubting not he would be pleased to
have her with him, she would have a fair
pretence

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pretence for quitting mr. Goodman's house, and the society of miss Flora, who had now rendered herself so irksome to her.

This did not hinder her, however, from reproaching mr. Goodman for having mentioned to her brother any thing in relation to her lovers, — “ You see, sir,” said she, “ that the one of them has already abandoned me, and you will also see, in a short time, that the other will be little the better for his rival's resignation.”

To this mr. Goodman pleasantly replied, that whatever she pretended at present, he believed better things from her good sense, and the merits of mr. Trueworth; to which miss Betsy, unwilling to prolong the conversation, only told him, he would find himself mistaken, and ran hastily up stairs to examine the contents of those letters, which, she had heard, lay on her toilet, ready for her perusal. — The first she broke open was from miss Forward, knowing it to be her's by the hand, and eager to see the event of fate, which, by the history she had given her, had appeared so doubtful.

To *miss* BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *Dear miss Betsy,*

‘ SINCE I saw you I have been driven
‘ to the last despair : — the kind sup-
‘ ply you left with me was quite ex-
‘ hausted, and I must infallibly have pe-
‘ rished, through want of the common
‘ necessaries of life, and the cruel usage
‘ of my mercenary landlady, if my poor
‘ aunt in the country had not sent me a
‘ small present, which for a small space
‘ of time afforded relief, but accompanied
‘ with the melancholly account that my
‘ father was inexorable to her persuasions,
‘ — would not hear of my return to
‘ L——e, and vowed never to see me
‘ more, or own me for his child : — soon
‘ was I again reduced to the lowest ebb
‘ of misery, — had scarce sufficient to fur-
‘ nish the provisions of another day, and
‘ was even threatened to be turned out
‘ of doors by the inhuman hag, who, I
‘ very well remember, you said, had her
‘ soul pictured in her countenance ; —
‘ but, my dear friend, in the midst of
‘ this distress, and when I thought no
‘ human help was near, my affairs took
‘ a most sudden and unexpected turn. —
‘ Fortune threw in my way a kinsman of
‘ my mother’s, whom I had never seen,
‘ nor

‘ nor even heard of before ; — he com-
‘ passionate my calamitous condition, —
‘ removed me from that dismal place, —
‘ allows me a handsome maintenance, and
‘ has promised to continue it, till nature,
‘ and the endeavours of my good aunt,
‘ shall work my father to a more gentle
‘ temper.

‘ I long to see you, and would have
‘ waited on you to return the money you
‘ were so kind to lend me, but knew not
‘ whether it were proper for me to do so,
‘ as I am wholly unacquainted with the
‘ family where you are. — A visit from
‘ you would therefore now be doubly
‘ agreeable, as I am lodged in a house
‘ less unworthy to receive you, than that
‘ wretched one to which I before took
‘ the liberty to make you an invitation.

‘ You may now find me at mr. Screen-
‘ er’s, the very next door to Linko’s-
‘ Head, in Tavistock-street, in Covent-
‘ garden, where, I flatter myself, your
‘ good-nature will soon bring you to her,
‘ who is impatient for that happiness, and
‘ will always be, dear miss Betsy,

‘ Your very affectionate,

‘ And most humble servant,

‘ A. FORWARD

P. S. I had forgot to tell you that I am
‘ every Friday engaged at my above-
‘ mentioned good cousin’s, and should
‘ never have forgiven myself, if by this
‘ omission you had lost your labour,
‘ and I the pleasure of your company.’

Miss Betsy, who little doubted the sin-
cerity of this epistle, was very much
touched with it, and resolved to comply
with the invitation it contained, in a short
time. — She now began to grow pretty
sleepy, and would, probably, have de-
ferred the perusal of the other two letters,
’till next morning, if miss Flora had not
come up to go to bed: — to avoid, there-
fore, entering into any conversation with
her, she took up the first that came to
hand, and found the contents as follows:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *My dear sister,*

‘ **A**S Mr. Goodman’s endeavours for
‘ procuring me a commission have
‘ not yet been attended with the desired
‘ success, I have been prevailed upon by
‘ the solicitations of my friends, to give
‘ them my promise of passing some part
‘ of the hunting season in L———e, so
‘ I shall not see you so soon as my last
‘ letter might

II.

D

‘ might

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‘ might make you expect; — but I will
‘ not dissemble, so far as to tell you,
‘ that to give you this information is the
‘ chief motive of my writing to you at
‘ present; — no, my dear Betty! it is one
‘ of much more consequence that now
‘ directs my pen, — it is to give you
‘ such remonstrances, as, I fear, you
‘ stand but in too much need of, to be-
‘ ware how you disregard the smiles of
‘ fortune, and become the enemy of your
‘ own happiness. — I received a letter
‘ yesterday from mr. Truworth; — he
‘ complains sadly of my staying in the
‘ country, and seems to think my pre-
‘ sence necessary for the advancement of
‘ his courtship to you. — I shall be al-
‘ ways glad to be obliged by you on any
‘ score, but extremely sorry to find my
‘ interests with you, as a brother, should
‘ have more effect on you than your own
‘ reason, and the merits of one of the
‘ most deserving men on earth. — I have
‘ no pretence to claim any authority over
‘ you by the ties of blood, but may cer-
‘ tainly flatter myself with having some
‘ influence over you as a friend, — enough
‘ at least I hope to prevail on you to
‘ consider seriously on this matter, and
‘ am persuaded, that if you once bring
‘ yourself to do so, mr. Truworth will
‘ want no other advocate to plead his
‘ cause.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 51

‘ cause, than your own understanding.—
‘ I am willing to believe the assurance
‘ you gave me in your last, of your heart
‘ being free from any impression yet en-
‘ deavoured to be made upon it; did I
‘ think otherwise I should be entirely si-
‘ lent on this occasion. — I would be far,
‘ my dear sister, from opposing your in-
‘ clinations, I would only wish to direct
‘ them where there is a prospect of the
‘ most felicity : — let me conjure you,
‘ therefore, to open your unprejudiced
‘ eyes, nor be wilfully blind to the good
‘ intended for you by your better stars.
‘ — As you can never expect proposals
‘ of more advantage, than those the love
‘ of mr. Truworth has inclined him to
‘ make you, — I may be pretty confident,
‘ that you have not a friend in the world,
‘ who would not highly condemn your
‘ want of giving due attention to it. —
‘ Forgive the warmth with which I ex-
‘ press myself, as it springs from the sin-
‘ cerest zeal for the establishment of your
‘ interest and happiness, than which no-
‘ thing is more at the heart of him,
‘ who is,

‘ With the most tender regard,

‘ Dear sister,

‘ Your very affectionate friend,

‘ And brother,

‘ F. THOUGHTLESS.

D 2

While

While miss Betsy was reading these letters, miss Flora, who immediately followed her into the chamber, would fain have interrupted her by one impertinent question or other; but receiving no answer to any thing she said, gave over speaking, and went directly to bed, and miss Betsy breaking open the third and last letter she had to peruse, found it contained as follows:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear miss Betsy,

I HAD wrote to you before, if I had not been prevented by an inflammation in my eyes, which, for some time past, has rendered my pen of no use to me, and I did not chuse to employ an emanuensis in what I have to say to you, but now take the first opportunity, being somewhat better, of giving you that advice, which, it may be reasonably supposed, a person of your years and inexperience of the world may stand in need of; or, if not so, will be of some service in corroborating the good sentiments you are already inspired with.

It

‘ It was with an extream concern I
‘ heard what happened on your account
‘ at Oxford, and hope you have so well
‘ reflected on the danger you were in, the
‘ consequences that attended it, and how
‘ much worse might probably have en-
‘ sued, as to be ever since more circum-
‘ spect and careful with what company
‘ you trust yourself. — I am far from re-
‘ proaching you with the effects of an
‘ accident altogether unforeseen, and im-
‘ possible to be even guessed at by you,
‘ but would beg you to keep always in
‘ your mind, that what has been, may
‘ some time or other be again, and that
‘ repeated inadvertencies may make hea-
‘ ven weary of continuing its protection:
‘ — but, my dear miss Betsy, it is not
‘ in my apprehensions of your own con-
‘ duct, that the greatest part of my fear
‘ for you consists; — the world, alas!
‘ and more particularly the place you live
‘ in, affords but too many wretches, of
‘ both sexes, who make it their business
‘ to entrap unwary innocence, and the
‘ most fair pretences are often the cover
‘ to the most foul designs: — there are
‘ so many daily Instances of the strict-
‘ est caution not being always a sufficient
‘ security against the snares laid for our
‘ destruction, that I look on it as half a
‘ miracle,

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‘ miracle, when a young woman, hand-
‘ some, and exposed as you are, escapes
‘ unprejudiced, either in her virtue or
‘ reputation. — Consider, my dear child,
‘ you have no tender mother, whose pre-
‘ cepts and example might keep you
‘ steady in the paths of prudence ; — no
‘ father, whose authority might awe the
‘ daring libertine from any injurious at-
‘ tack ; and are but too much mistress of
‘ yourself. — In fine, thus environed with
‘ temptations, I see no real defence for
‘ you but in a good husband. — I have
‘ ever condemned rushing too early into
‘ marriage, and of risquing for the sake
‘ of one convenience, the want, perhaps,
‘ of a thousand others ; but when an offer
‘ happens to be made, equally honour-
‘ able and advantageous, and which af-
‘ fords an almost assured prospect of every
‘ thing necessary to compleat the happi-
‘ ness of that state, it cannot be too soon
‘ in life accepted. — I hear with pleasure,
‘ that an offer, such as I have been de-
‘ scribing, is now presented to you, and
‘ it would give me an adequate concern
‘ to hear that you had rejected it. — I
‘ need not tell you I mean mr. True-
‘ worth ; for though there may be many
‘ others who make their addresses to you
‘ on the same score, yet I am entirely ig-
‘ norant of every thing relating to them ;
‘ but

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 55

‘ but I am well assured, not only by your
‘ brother’s testimony, but by several gen-
‘ tlemen of this county, that in the for-
‘ tune, person, and amiable qualities of
‘ that gentleman are comprised all that
‘ you either can, or ought to wish in a
‘ husband : — trifle not then with a heart
‘ so deserving of you ; — scruple not to
‘ become a wife, when merit, such as his,
‘ invites, and so many reasons concur to
‘ urge you to consent. — Believe me,
‘ there is more true felicity in the sincere
‘ and tender friendship of one man of
‘ honour, than in all the flattering pro-
‘ fessions of a thousand coxcombs. — I
‘ have much more to say to you on this
‘ head, but shall defer it, ’till you let
‘ me know with what kind of sentiments
‘ it is that you regard the gentleman I
‘ have been speaking of, which I beg you
‘ will do without disguise : — be satisfied
‘ that the secret of your real inclinations
‘ will be as safe in my keeping as your
‘ own, and that I am,

‘ With the most perfect amity,

‘ My dear *miss* Betsy,

‘ Your constant friend,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ M. TRUSTY.’

The time of night did not permit miss Betsy to give these letters all the attention which the writers of them, doubtless, desired she should do; but she locked them carefully in her cabinet, resolving to consider the purport of them more seriously before she returned any answer.

~~CHAPTER V.~~

CHAP. V.

Serves as a supplement to the former.

THE next morning miss Flora opened her lips almost as soon as she did her eyes, to talk to miss Betsy on the design had been agreed upon between them the day before, in relation to mr. Staple. — She told her, she had employed her whole thoughts about it ever since, and that she had found out a way of introducing the discourse, so as to give him no suspicion that she came from her, yet, at the same time, take away all his apprehensions of her being in love with mr. Truworth; and added, that she would go to his lodgings immediately after breakfast.

• Indeed,” replied miss Betsy, fullenly,
 “ you shall do no such thing; — I do not
 “ care

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 57

“ care what his apprehensions are, or any
“ one’s else ; — the men may all think
“ and do as they will, — I shall not fill
“ my mind with any stuff about them.”
“ — Heyday,” cried *Miss* Flora, a good
deal shocked at this sudden turn, “ what
“ whim has got possession of you now ?”
“ The whim you endeavoured to possess
“ me with,” said *Miss* Betsy, scornfully,
“ would have been a very ridiculous one
“ I am sure ; — but I have considered
“ better on it, and despise such foolish
“ fancies.” — “ Good-lack,” returned
the other, “ you are grown wonderous
“ wise methinks, — at least imagine your-
“ self so ; — but I shall go to *Mr.* Staple
“ for all this, — I cannot bear that he
“ should think you are in love with
“ *Truworth.*” — I know no business,”
said *Miss* Betsy, in a haughty tone, “ you
“ have either with my love or hate, and
“ I desire, for the future, you will for-
“ bear troubling your head in my affairs.”

Miss Flora then told her, that what she
had offered was merely in regard to her
reputation, and then ran over again all
the arguments she had urged, in order to
prevail on her to come into the measures
proposed ; but whatever she said,
her in the wheedling or remonstrating
sent, was equally ineffectual, the other
remained

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remained firm in her resolution, and behaved in a manner so different from what miss Flora had ever seen her do before, that she knew not what to think of it. — Having her own reasons, however, to bring her, if possible, to a less grave way of thinking, she omitted nothing in the power of artifice, that she imagined might be conducive to that end. — All the time they were rising, — all the time they were dressing, did she continue to labour on this score, without being able to obtain any other answers to what she said, than such as were peremptorily in the negative.

It is certain, that miss Betsy was of so soft and tractable a disposition, that half the arguments miss Flora had alledged, would, at another time, have won her to consent to things of much greater consequence than this appeared to be; but the discovery she had the day before made of her deceit, and the little good-will she had towards her, gave her sufficient reason to apprehend, that she had some further designs than she pretended in this project, though of what nature it could be was not in her power to conceive. — The thing in dispute seemed to her extremely trifling in itself, but the eagerness with which she was pressed to it, by a person
of

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 59

of whose treachery she had so flagrant a proof, convinced her, that she ought not on any account to acquiesce.

Miss Flora, on the other hand, was disconcerted beyond measure at this unexpected change in miss Betsy's humour, of which she was as little able to divine the cause, as the other was to guess the design she had formed; but determining to accomplish her point, if possible, at any rate, she endeavoured all she could to dissemble her chagrin, and still affected a mighty regard for the honour of miss Betsy, telling her, she was resolved to serve her whether she would or not, and that how much soever she disapproved it, she should pursue her first intention, and undeceive mr. Staple in the opinion he had, of her being so silly as to fall in love with mr. Truworth.

Miss Betsy on hearing this, and not doubting but she would do as she had said, turned towards her, and looking full upon her with a countenance composed enough, but which had yet in it somewhat between the ironical and severe, replied in these terms, — “ Since you are so much bent,” said she, “ on making a visit to mr. Staple, far be it from me, miss Flora, to deprive that gentleman

“ of the favour you intend him, provided
 “ you give me your promise, in the pre-
 “ sence of mr. Goodman, and he will be
 “ your security for the performance of it,
 “ that you will mention neither my name
 “ nor that of mr. Truworth, and above
 “ all, that you will not pretend to have
 “ any knowledge of affairs you never
 “ have been trusted with.”

However inconsiderate, or incautious, miss Betsy may appear to the reader, as to her conduct in general, it must be acknowledged, that at this time she shewed an uncommon presence of mind. — This was, indeed, the only way to put a stop, and quash at once that scheme, which her false friend had formed to do her a real prejudice, under the pretence of serving her.

It is not in words to express the confusion miss Flora was in, on hearing miss Betsy speak in this manner. — Bold as she was by nature, and habituated to repartee, she had not now the power of uttering one word: innocence itself, when over-awed by authority, could not have stood more daunted and abashed, while the other, with a careless air, added,

 “ As soon as we go down stairs I shall

 “ speak

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 61

“ speak to mr. Goodman about this
“ matter.”

Whether miss Betsy really intended to put this menace in execution, or not, is uncertain; for miss Flora recovering her spirits, and her cunning at the same time, affected to burst into a violent fit of laughter, “ Mr. Goodman!” said she; “ mighty pretty, indeed! — you would trouble mr. Goodman with the little impertinencies we talk on between ourselves! but do so if you think proper. — I shall tell him the truth, that I made this proposal to you only to try you, and but acted the second part of what mr. Chatfree had begun. — You did not imagine sure,” continued she, with a malicious sneer, “ that I loved you so well, that for your sake I would hazard my person and reputation, by going to see a young gay fellow at his own lodgings.”

“ As for that,” cried miss Betsy, with a look as contemptuous as she could possibly assume, “ I am equally well acquainted with the modesty and sincerity of miss Flora, and know how to set a just value upon both.” — In speaking these words, having now got on her cloaths, she flung out of the room without

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without staying to hear what answer the other would have made.

After this, these two high spirits had little intercourse, never speaking to each other, but on such common affairs as were unavoidable between persons who lived in the same house, eat at the same table, and lay in the same bed. — How miss Flora employed her thoughts will very shortly be seen, but we must first examine what effect these late occurrences had on the mind of miss Betsey.

Young as she was, she might be said to have seen a great deal of the world; and as she had a fine understanding, and a very just notion of things, wanted only to reflect on the many follies and deceits which some of those who call themselves the beau monde are guilty of, to be enabled to despise them. — The last letter she had received from lady Trusty made a strong impression on her, and casting a retrospect on several past transactions she had been witness of, as well as those she had been concerned in herself, began to wonder at, and condemn the vanity of being pleased with such shadowy nothings: — such fleeting, unsubstantial delights, accompanied with noise and hurry in the possession, and attended with weariness
and

and vexation of spirit. — A multiplicity of admirers seemed now to her among this number; — her soul confided, that to encourage the addresses of a top, was both dangerous and silly; and to flatter with vain hopes the sincere passion of a man of honour, was equally ungenerous and cruel.

These considerations were very favourable to Mr. Truworth; — she ran through every particular of that gentleman's character and behaviour, and could find nothing which could make her stand excused even to herself, for continuing to treat him with the little seriousness she had hitherto done.

“What then shall I do with him?” said she to herself. “Must I at once discard him, — desire him to desist his visits, and tell him I am determined never to be his! — or must I resolve to think of marrying him, and henceforward entertain him, as the man who is really ordained to be one day my husband! — I have at present rather an aversion, than an inclination to a wedded state; yet if my mind should alter in this point, where shall I find a partner so qualified to make me happy in it? — but yet,” continued she, “to
“become

“ become a matron at my years, is what
 “ I cannot brook the thoughts of ; — if
 “ he loves me he must wait, — it will
 “ be sufficient to receive the addresses of
 “ no other ; but then how shall I refuse
 “ those who may make an offer of them,
 “ without giving the world room to be-
 “ lieve I am pre-engaged.”

Thus did she argue with herself, —
 the dilemma appeared hard to her, but
 what was the result of her reasonings will
 best appear in the answer she sent to lady
 Trusty’s letter, which was in the follow-
 ing terms :

To lady TRUSTY.

‘ *Madam,*

‘ I Received the honour of yours, and
 ‘ I sincerely thank you for the good
 ‘ wishes and advice contained in it : be
 ‘ assured, madam, I have a just sense of
 ‘ the value I ought to set upon them,
 ‘ and shall henceforth do the utmost in
 ‘ my power to deserve it. — I have, in-
 ‘ deed, no parent to direct, and but few
 ‘ faithful friends to guide me through
 ‘ the perplexing labyrinth of life. — I
 ‘ confess, I have been too often misled
 ‘ by the prevalence of example, and my
 ‘ own idle caprice, — it is therefore the
 ‘ highest

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 65.

highest charity to shew me to myself.
— I now see, and am ashamed of the
many inadvertencies I have been guilty
of. — The dangers which a young wo-
man, like me, must necessarily be con-
tinually exposed to, appear to me, from
what you say of them, in their proper
colours, and convince me, that no per-
son of understanding would condemn
me, if to avoid so many threatened ills,
I flew to that asylum your ladyship has
mentioned. — I will own to you yet
farther, madam, that I am not insen-
sible of the merits of mr. Truworth,
nor of the advantages, which would at-
tend my acceptance of his proposals;
but I know not how it is, I cannot all
at once bring myself into a liking of
the marriage state. — Be assured of this,
that I never yet have seen any man,
whom my heart has been more inclined
to favour, and that, at present, I nei-
ther receive, nor desire the addresses of
any other. — There is no answering for
events, but, in the way of thinking I
now am, it seems not improbable, that
I shall one day comply with what my
friends take so much pains in perswad-
ing me to. — In the mean time, I be-
secch you to believe I shall regulate my
conduct, so as to ease you of all those
ap-

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‘ apprehensions you are so good to entertain on my account. — I am,

‘ With a profound respect,

‘ MADAM, ‘

‘ Your ladyship’s most obliged,

‘ And most devoted servant,

‘ E. THOUGHTLESS.’

Miss Betty also answered her brother’s letter at the same time; but the purport of it being much the same with that she wrote to lady Trusty, there is no occasion for inserting it.



CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Seems to bring things pretty near a conclusion.

MISS Betsy was now in as happy a disposition as any of her friends, or even Mr. Truworth himself could desire; — she listened to the confirmations he was every day giving her of his passion, with the greatest affability, and much more seriousness and attention, than she had been accustomed. — The quarrel she had with Miss Flora making her willing to avoid her as much as possible, he was frequently alone with her whole hours together, and had all the opportunities he could wish of cultivating the esteem, she made no scruple of confessing she had for him. — As Mr. Staple was now gone out of town, pursuant to the resolution he had taken, and no other rival, at least none encouraged by Miss Betsy, had as yet seconded him, he had all the reason in the world to flatter himself, that the accomplishment of his wishes were not far distant.

Plays,

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Plays, — operas, — and masquerades were now beginning to come in vogue and he had the satisfaction to see his relations refuse whatever tickets were offered her for those diversions, by any of the gentlemen who visited lady Mellasin, at the same time readily agreed to accompany him to these, or any other public entertainments, whenever he requested that favour of her.

Miss Betsey's behaviour in this point however, had more the air, than the reality of kindness to mr. Truworth; in effect it was not because she would not accept of tickets from any other person than himself, but because they were offered by gentlemen of lady Mellasin's acquaintance, and consequently, in respect to her; miss Flora had the same share in the invitation, with whom she was determined never more to be seen abroad.

This required some sort of contrivance to be managed in such a manner as to give no umbrage to mr. Goodman, lady Mellasin, for the former of whom she had always a very great esteem, did not chuse to afford the latter the cause of complaint against her, while she continued to live in the same house.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 69

The method she took therefore to avoid a thing so disagreeable to her, and at the same time to give no occasion of offence, was always to make choice of one diversion, when she knew *Miss* Flora was pre-engaged to another.

To partake of these pleasures, which *Mr.* Truworth, seeing into her temper, was almost every day presenting, she invited sometimes one lady, sometimes another of those she conversed with; but the person who most frequently accompanied her, was *Miss* Mabel, a young lady, who lived in the next street, and whom she had been acquainted with ever since her coming to London, but had not been altogether so agreeable to her, as she really deserved, and otherwise would have been, if *lady* Mellasin and *Miss* Flora had not represented her as a prying, censorious, ill-natured creature, and, in fine, given her all the epithets which compose the character of a prude.

She was, indeed, both in principles and behaviour the very reverse of *Miss* Flora; — she was modest without affectation, — reserved without austerity, — cheerful without levity, — compassionate and benevolent in her nature, — and, to say all, was perfectly sincere: — *Miss*
Betsy

Betsy had never wanted penetration enough to see, and to admire the amiable qualities of this young lady, nor had been at all influenced by the character given of her by lady Mellasin and miss Flora, but being herself of too gay and volatile a temper, the more serious deportment of the other gave somewhat of a check to her's, and for that reason rendered her society less coveted by her. — The letter of lady Trusty, however, joined to the late accidents which had happened, having now given her a turn of mind vastly different from what it had been a very little time before, made her now prefer the conversation of miss Mabel, to most others of her acquaintance.

This young lady having been often in mr. Truworth's company, with miss Betsy, saw enough into him to be assured the passion he professed for her was perfectly honourable and sincere; and as she had a real affection for her fair friend, and thought it a match greatly to her advantage, was perpetually remonstrating to her, that she could not treat with too much complaisance, a lover so every way deserving of her.

It is certain, that what she said on this score, had some weight with miss Betsy;

mr.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 71.

Mr. Goodman also was every day admonishing her in behalf of Mr. Truworth, as he thought it his duty to do, both as her guardian and her friend. — In fine, never was a heart more beset, — more forced, as it were, into tender sentiments than that of this young lady: — first by the merits and assiduities of the passionate invader, and next by the persuasions of all those, who she had any reason to believe had her interest in view, and wished to see her happiness established.

Enemy as she was by nature to serious reflection, on any account, much more on that of marriage, every thing now contributed to compel her to it; she could not avoid seeing and confessing within herself, that if ever she became a wife, the title could not be attended with more felicity, than when conferred on her by a person of Mr. Truworth's fortune, character, and disposition.

She was one day alone, and in a very considerative mood, when a letter was brought to her, which she was told came by the penny-post; as she was not accustomed to receive any by that carriage, it pretty much surprised her, but much more so, when having hastily opened it, she found the contents as follow:

To

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ *Madam,*

‘ IT is with an inexpressible concern,
 ‘ that I relate to you a thing, which
 ‘ I am but too sensible will give you
 ‘ some disquiet, nor could have prevailed
 ‘ with myself on any terms to have done
 ‘ it, were it not to preserve you from
 ‘ falling into much greater afflictions than
 ‘ the discovery I am about to make, can
 ‘ possibly inflict : — but not to keep you
 ‘ in suspense, — you are courted by a
 ‘ gentleman whose name is Truworth ;
 ‘ — he is recommended by your brother,
 ‘ who, alas ! knows him much less than
 ‘ he imagines : — he has indeed a large
 ‘ estate, and does not want accomplish-
 ‘ ments to endear him to the fair sex, —
 ‘ I wish he had as much intrinsic honour
 ‘ and sincerity to deserve, as he has per-
 ‘ sonal endowments to acquire, the fa-
 ‘ vours so lavishly bestowed upon him.
 ‘ — I hope, however, you have not been
 ‘ so much deceived by the innocence of
 ‘ your own heart, and the fancied inte-
 ‘ grity of his, as to be so distractedly in
 ‘ love with him, as he has the vanity to
 ‘ boast, and your companion and sup-
 ‘ posed friend, miss Mabel, reports you
 ‘ are : — if his designs upon you are
 ‘ such

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‘ such as they ought to be, he is at least
‘ ashamed to confess they are so; and
‘ the lady I just mentioned, whispers it
‘ in all companies, that a marriage with
‘ you is of all things in the world the
‘ farthest from his thoughts. — He plain-
‘ ly says, that he but trifles with you,
‘ ’till your brothers come to town, and
‘ will then find some pretence to break
‘ entirely with you, — perhaps, on the
‘ score of fortune; but of that I am not
‘ positive, — I only repeat some part of
‘ those unhandsome expressions his un-
‘ worthy tongue has uttered.

‘ But, madam, as I have given you
‘ this intelligence, so I think it my duty
‘ to offer you some advice for your be-
‘ haviour, in so nice and critical a junc-
‘ ture. — As he threatens to abandon you
‘ on the arrival of your brothers, I
‘ should think, that if you forbid him
‘ your presence, ’till that time, it would
‘ not only be a sure touchstone of his
‘ affection, but also be a means of clear-
‘ ing your reputation from those blemishes
‘ it has received on his account. — After
‘ what I have said, I believe it would be
‘ needless to add, that the less freely you
‘ converse with miss Mabel, the less you
‘ will suffer, both in the judgment of their

‘ world, and your own future peace of
‘ mind.

‘ Slight not this counsel, because given
‘ behind the curtain, but be assured it
‘ comes from one, who is,

‘ With the sincerest attachment,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ Though concealed servant.

If miss Betty had received this letter a very small time before she did, it might probably have wrought on her all the effect it was intended for; but she had scarce read it half through, before the lucky discovery of miss Flora’s baseness, so seasonably made to her by mr. Saving, came fresh into her mind, and she was at no loss to guess at the malicious purpose, and the author of it, though wrote in a hand altogether a stranger to her.

She doubted not but it was a trick of miss Flora’s, to cause a separation between her and mr. Truworth; but the motives, which had instigated her to do this, were not in her power to conceive.

“ Revenge for her disappointed expectations,” said she to herself, “ might make her take the steps she did, on mr. Saving’s account ; but what has mr. Truworth done to her ? — He never pretended love to her, — he neither flattered, or deceived her vanity, — it must be therefore only a wicked propensity, — an envious, — unsocial disposition, — a love of mischief implanted in her nature, and uncorrected by reason or principle, that has induced her to be guilty of this poor, — low, enervate spight ; but I am resolved to mortify it.”

She was not long considering in what manner she should proceed, to do as she had said, and, I believe the reader will acknowledge, she hit upon one, as effectual for that end as could have been contrived.

She appeared extremely gay the whole time of dinner, and as soon as it was over, “ I will present you with a desert, sir,” said she to mr. Goodman : “ I’ll shew you what pains has been taken to break off my acquaintance with mr. Truworth, by some wretch, who either envies me the honour of his affections,

“ or him the place they imagine he has
 “ in mine ; but, I beseech you, read it,”
 continued she, “ and I will appeal to
 “ you, lady Mellasin, and miss Flora,
 “ if ever there was a more stupid plot.”

“ Stupid enough, indeed,” cried the
 honest merchant, as soon as he had done
 reading, “ but it is yet more base.—I am
 “ glad, however,” continued he, “ to
 “ find your good sense prevents you from
 “ being imposed upon by such artifices.”
 — “ This is so shallow a one,” answered
 she, “ that a very small share of under-
 “ standing might serve to defend any
 “ one from being deceived by it.—I
 “ pity the weakness, while I despise the
 “ baseness of such mean incendiaries ; —
 “ mr. Truworth, however, will fare
 “ the better for this attempt against
 “ him ; —I will now make no scruple
 “ of preferring him to all mankind be-
 “ sides, — and perhaps, when my bro-
 “ thers arrive, shall consent to every
 “ thing he desires,”

Lady Mellasin could not help applaud-
 ing the spirit and resolution she shewed
 on this occasion, and mr. Goodman was
 quite charmed with it ; and both of them
 joined in the severest exclamations against
 the folly and wickedness of the letter-

writer ;

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writer ; but miss Flora said little, and as soon as she could quit the table with decency, went up into her chamber, saying, she had a piece of work in hand, which she was in haste to finish.

If miss Betsy had wanted any confirmation of the truth of her suspicions, the looks of miss Flora, during this whole discourse, would have removed all doubt in her, and the opportunity of venting the spleen she had so justly conceived against her, without seeming to do so, gave her a most exquisite satisfaction.

CH A P. VII.

Is the better for being short.

MISS Flora retired to her chamber, indeed, not to employ herself in the manner she pretended, but to give a loose to passions more inordinate and outrageous, than it would naturally be believed could have taken possession of so young a heart.

But it is now high time to let the reader see into the secret springs, which her wicked wit in motion, and induced

duced her to act in the manner she had done.

Through the whole course of the preceding pages, many hints have been given, that the inclinations of this young lady were far from being unblameable, and it will not seem strange, that a person of the disposition she has all along testified, should envy and malign those charms she every day saw so much extolled, and preferred above her own; but we do not ordinarily find one, who all gay and free, like her, and who various times, and for various objects, had experienced those emotions which we call love, should, all at once, be inspired with a passion no less serious, than it was violent, for a person, who never made the least addresses to her on that account.

Yet so in effect it was: — Mr. Trueworth had been but a very few times in her company, before she began to entertain desires for her fair friend. — Whenever she had an opportunity of speaking to him alone, she made him many advances, which he either did not, or would not interpret in the sense she meant them. — This coldness, instead of abating, but the more inflamed her wishes, and looking on the passion he had for Miss Betty,

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as the only impediment to the gratification of her inclinations, she curst his constancy, and the beauties which excited it. — So true is that observation of Mr. Dryden,

- Love! various minds does variously
 • inspire;
- He stirs in gentle natures gentle fires,
• Like that of incense on the altar laid;
- But raging flames tempestuous souls
 • invade.
- A fire which ev'ry windy passion
 • blows,
- With pride it mounts, and with re-
 • venge it glows.'

Miss Flora was not of a temper, either to bear the pangs of hopeless love, in silent grief, or to give way too readily to despair. In spite of the indifference she found herself treated with by Mr. Trueworth, she was not without hope, that if she could by any means occasion a disunion between him and Miss Betsy, he would be brought to cast his eyes on her, and return her flame with some degree of reciprocity.

For this end she had taken some pains in endeavouring to persuade Mr. Trueworth either to write, or suffer her

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to go, to mr. Staple, in order, as she pretended, to undeceive that gentleman in his opinion, that she was in love with mr. Truworth; but her intentions, in reality, were to make him believe, that he himself was the favoured person, and had much the advantage over his rival in the affections of his mistress. — This she doubted not would make him quit his resolution of going into the country, and encourage him to renew his courtship with the same fervency as ever. — The pride she knew miss Betsey took in a multiplicity of lovers, and the equality with which she had carried herself between him and mr. Truworth, and which probably she would continue, seemed to afford her a fair prospect of giving mr. Truworth so much cause of discontent, as to make him break off with a woman, who after what had passed made a distinction between him and the person he had twice vanquished in the field. — She knew it would, at least, create a good deal of perplexity among them, and delay, if not totally prevent, the completion of what she so much dreaded.

But this scheme being rendered abortive, by the seasonable discovery miss Betsey had made of her perfidiousness, she set her wits to work for some other new inven-

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invention, and believing that *miss* Betsy's pride would immediately take fire on the least suspicion of any insult being offered, either to her beauty or reputation, procured an agent to write the above inserted letter; — the effect of which has been already shewn.

This disappointment was the more grievous to her, as she had so little expected it: — she broke the sticks of her fan, tore every thing that came in her way, — flew about the room, like a princess in a tragedy; — wanting the means of venting the rage she was possessed of in great things, she exercised it in small. — A fine petticoat of *miss* Betsy's happening to hang on the back of a chair, she threw a standish of ink upon it, as if by accident; and it is no breach of charity to believe, would have served the owner in much worse manner, if her power had been equal to her will, and she could have done it without danger to herself.

To add to the fury and distraction of her mind, continuing still in her chamber, and happening to be pretty near the window, she saw *miss* Betsy, *miss* Mabel, and *mr.* Truworth pass by in a landau, that gentleman having, it seems, invited these ladies on a party of pleasure: —

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“ You shall not long enjoy this satisfaction,” cried she to herself, “ if it be in human wit to separate you ;” — but at this sight, the turbulent passions of her soul becoming more outrageous, “ O may the machine that conveys you be thrown from off its wheels !” pursued she : “ May the wine you drink be poisoned ! — May the first morsel you attempt to swallow, mistake its way, and choak you in the passage !”

Thus did she rave, not like one possessed with seven, but seven thousand fiends, and had perhaps remained in this wild way till her brain had been absolutely turned, if lady Mellasin, having a great deal of company, had not positively commanded her to come down, after having sent several times in more mild terms, to let her know what friends were there.

It was some days before the unhappy, and more wicked, miss Flora, could recollect her scattered senses, enough for the contrivance of any further mischief ; but those evil spirits, to which she had yielded but too much the mastery of her heart, and all its faculties, at length inspired her with, and enabled her in the execution of, a design of the most barbarous

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rous kind, and which, for a time, she saw successful, even to her most sanguine expectations.

But while she was [ruminating on projects, which had neither virtue nor generosity for their patrons, miss Betsy passed her days in that cheerfulness which is the constant companion of uncorrupted innocence, and a mind uninfluenced by any tempestuous passions; — but as it is natural, even to the sweetest temper, to take pleasure in the mortification of those who have endeavoured to injure us without cause given on our parts, she could not forbear being highly diverted to see the pains miss Flora took to conceal the inward disturbance of her soul: — the awkward excuses she made, for the damage done her petticoat, gave her more satisfaction, than she could have felt vexation for the spoiling the best thing she had in the world.

Miss Mabel, to whom miss Betsy had imparted the whole of this affair, was not at all surpris'd at that part of the letter which related to herself, as she had often been informed, by several of her acquaintance, of the character given of her by the malicious girl; but neither of these

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young ladies could be able to imagine, as they suspected not her passion for mr. Truworth, from what source this pretended enmity to him was derived.

It would certainly have greatly contributed to the happiness of that gentleman, to have known in what manner his mistress had resented the injustice had been done him; but miss Betsy forbore to let him into the secret, as being already sufficiently convinced of the sincerity of his affection, and would not put him to the trouble of giving her new proofs of it, by shewing him the ridiculous accusation, anonymously formed against him.



CHAP. VIII.

Contains some incidents which will be found equally interesting and entertaining, or the author is very much mistaken.

MR. Truworth had all the reason imaginable from the whole deportment of miss Betsy towards him, to believe that there wanted little more for the conclusion of his marriage with her, than the arrival

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arrival of her two brothers ; she had often told him, whenever he pressed her on that score, that she would give no definitive answer, till she had received the advice and approbation of the elder Mr. Thoughtless.

That gentleman was now expected in a few days, and Mr. Francis Thoughtless having intelligence of his being on his return, was also preparing to leave L—, in order to meet him on his first arrival in London ; but during this short space of time, some events fell out, which put a great damp on the gaiety of those, who had with so much impatience wished for their approach.

Mr. Trueworth had an aunt, who besides being the nearest relation he had living, and the only one in London, was extremely respected by him, on account of her great prudence, exemplary virtue, and the tender affection she had always testified for him. — This good lady thought herself bound by duty, as she was led by love, to make a thorough enquiry into the character of the young person her nephew was about to marry : — she was acquainted with many who had been in company with Miss Betsy, and were witnesses of her behaviour ; —

- she asked the opinion of those among them, whom she looked upon as the most candid, concerning the match now on the carpet, and was extremely troubled to find their answers such, as were no way conformable to the idea Mr. Truworth had endeavoured to inspire her with of his mistress's perfections: — they all, indeed, agreed that she was handsome, — well-shaped, — genteel, — had a great deal of wit, vivacity, and good-humour; but shook their heads when any of those requisites to make the marriage-state agreeable were mentioned.

Poor Miss Betsy, as the reader has had but too much opportunity to observe, was far from setting forth to any advantage, the real good qualities she was possessed of: — on the contrary, the levity of her conduct rather disfigured the native innocence of her mind, and the purity of her intentions; so that, according to the poet,

‘ All saw her spots, but few her brightness took.’

The old lady not being able to hear any thing concerning her intended niece, but what was greatly to her dissatisfaction, was continually remonstrating to Mr. Truworth,

Trueworth, that the want of solidity in a wife was one of the worst misfortunes that could attend a marriage-state; — that the external beauties of the person could not atone for the internal defects of the mind; — that a too great gaiety du cœur, frequently led women into errors without their designing to be guilty of them; and conjured him to consider well before the irrevocable words, ‘I take you for better and for worse,’ were past, how ill it would suit, either with his honour, or his peace of mind, if she whom he now wished to make his partner for life should, after she became so, behave in the same manner she now did.

Mr. Trueworth listened to what she said, with all the attention she could desire, but was too passionately in love to be much influenced by it: — not that he did not see there were some mistakes in the conduct of miss Betsy, which he could wish reformed, yet he could not look upon them as so dangerous to her virtue and reputation, and therefore omitted no arguments, which he thought might justify his choice, and clear the accused fair one from all blame, in the eyes of a person, whose approbation he was very desirous of obtaining.

The warmth with which he spake, convinced his aunt, that to oppose his inclinations in this point was only warring with the winds, she desisted from speaking any more against the marriage, and contented herself with telling him, that since he was bent on making miss Betsy his wife, she should be glad if, at least, he would remove her into the country, and prevent her returning to this town as long as possible.

This last counsel had a great deal of weight with mr. Truworth; — he had often wished in his heart, when seeing her, as he often did, encompassed with a crowd of such, whom his good understanding made him despise, that if ever he became her husband, it might be in his power to prevail on her, to break off acquaintance with the greatest part of those she at present conversed with; and now being admitted to entertain her with more freedom and seriousness than ever, he resolved to sound her sentiments on that score, and try to discover how far she could relish the retirements of a country life.

Accordingly, the next visit he made to her, he began to represent, in the most
 Th
 pathetic

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pathetic terms he was able, the true felicity that two people, who loved each other, might enjoy when remote from the noise and interruption of a throng of giddy visitors. — “The deity of soft desires,” said he, “flies the confused glare of pomp
“ and public shews; — ’tis in the shady
“ bowers, or on the banks of a sweet
“ purling stream, he spreads his downy
“ wings, and wafts ten thousand name-
“ less pleasures on the fond, — the inno-
“ cent, — and the happy pair.”

He was going on, but she interrupted him with a loud laugh; — “Hold, —
“ hold,” cried she, “was there ever such
“ a romantic description? — I wonder
“ how such silly ideas come into your
“ head? — Shady bowers! and purling
“ streams! — Heavens, how insipid! —
“ Well,” continued she, “you may be
“ the Strephon of the woods, if you
“ think fit; but I shall never envy
“ the happiness of the Cloe that accom-
“ panies you in these fine recesses. —
“ What! to be cooped up like a tame
“ dove, only to coo, — and bill, — and
“ breed? — O, it would be a delicious
“ life indeed!”

Mr. Truworth now perceived, to his
great vexation, the late seriousness he
had

had observed in miss Betsy, and which had given him so much satisfaction, was no more than a short-lived interval, — a sudden start of reason and recollection soon dissipated, and that her temper, in reality, was still as light, as wild, and as inconsiderate as ever. — The ridicule with which she treated what he said, did not, however, hinder him from proceeding in the praise of a country life; but happening to say, that innocence could no where else be so secure, she presently took up the word, and with a disdainful air replied, that innocence in any one, but an idiot, might be secure in any place; to which he retorted, that reason was at sometimes absent, even in those who had the greatest share of it at others.

Many smart repartees passed between them on this subject, in most of which miss Betsy had the better; but mr. Trueworth, not willing to give up the point, reminded her that Solomon, the most luxurious, and withal the wisest of men, pronounced, that all the gaieties and magnificence of the earth were vanity and vexation of spirit. — “He did so,” replied she, with a scornful smile; “but it was not till he had enjoyed them all, and was grown past the power of enjoying

“ yet further : — when I am so, 'tis possible I may say the same.”

Mr. Truworth finding she was pretty much stung at some things he had said, and conscious that in this discourse he had in some measure forgot the respect due from a lover to his mistress, would not pursue the topic any farther, but, as artfully as he could, turned the conversation on things more agreeable to *Miss* Betsy's way of thinking : — he could not, however, after they had parted, forbear ruminating on the contempt she had shewn of a country life, and was not so easy as the submissiveness of his passion made him affect to be, on taking leave. This was, however, a matter of slight moment 'to him, when compared with what soon after ensued.

I believe, that from the last letter of *Miss* Forward to *Miss* Betsy, the reader may suspect it was not by a kinsman she was maintained ; but it is proper to be more particular on that affair, and shew how that unfortunate creature, finding herself utterly discarded by her father, and abandoned to the utmost distresses, accepted of the offer made her by a rich merchant, of five guineas a week to his mistress.

But

But as few women, who have once lost the sense of honour, ever recover it again, but, on the contrary, endeavour to lose all sense of shame also, devote themselves to vice, and act whatever interest or inclination prompts them to; miss Forward could not content herself with the embraces, nor allowance of her keeper, but received both the presents and caresses of as many as she had charms to attract.

Sir Basil Loveit was a great favourite with her, and if among such a plurality one might be said to have the preference, it was he: — this young baronet had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Truworth abroad; — they had travelled together through the greatest part of Italy, and had been separated only by Mr. Truworth's being called home, on account of some family affair. — Sir Basil being but lately arrived, they had not seen each other since, 'till meeting by accident in a coffee-house, they renewed their former friendship. — After the usual compliments, Mr. Truworth proposed passing the evening together: to which Sir Basil replied, that he should be glad of the opportunity, but was engaged to sup with a lady; but, said he, after a pause, 'tis where I can be free, and you shall go with me. — To
which

which the other having consented, sir Basil told him, as they were going towards the house, that there would be no occasion to use much ceremony; for it was only to a lady of pleasure he was conducting him; but added, that she was a fine girl, — seemed to have been well brought up, — had been but lately come upon the town, and behaved with more modesty than most of her profession.

Mr. Truworth had never any great relish for the conversation of these sort of women, much less now, when his whole heart was taken up with an honourable passion for a person, who, in spite of the little errors of her conduct, he thought deserving of his affections; yet as he had given his promise, he imagined, that to go back would be too precise, and subject him to the raillery of his less scrupulous friend.

Miss Forward, for it was she to whom this visit was made, received them in a manner, which justified the character sir Basil had given of her. — There was, however, a certain air of libertinism, both in her looks and gestures, which would have convinced Mr. Truworth, if he had not been told so before, that she was one of those unhappy creatures, who make traffic

traffic of their beauty. The gentlemen had not been there above a quarter of an hour, before a maid-servant came into the room, and told miss Forward, that a young lady, who said her name was Thoughtless, was at the door in a chair, and desired to see her; — “O my dear miss Betsy Thoughtless,” cried she, “desire her to walk up immediately.” — “This is lucky,” said sir Basil, “I wanted a companion for my friend, — now each man will have his bird.” — “Hush,” cried miss Forward, “I can assure you she is virtuous, — take care what you say.”

Mr. Truworth was so much alarmed at hearing the name of miss Betsy, that being retired to a window, in order to recover himself from the confusion he was in, that he heard not what miss Forward had said to sir Basil: — miss Betsy presently entering the room, miss Forward ran to embrace her, saying, “My dear miss Betsy, how glad am I to see you!” — To which the other returned, “My dear miss Forward, how ashamed am I to have been so long absent! — but one foolish thing or other has still prevented my coming.”

Sir Basil then saluted her with a great deal of politeness, though with less respect than doubtless he would have done, had he seen her in any other place. — Mr. Truworth, who by this time had resolved in what manner he should act, now turned, and advanced towards the company, — Miss Betsy on seeing him, cried out, in some surprise, “ Mr. Truworth! good God! who thought of finding you here?” — “ You did not, madam, I dare answer,” replied he, with a very grave air, “ and I as little expected the honour of meeting you here.” — O, you are acquainted then, said Sir Basil, laughing, “ this is merry enough, — I find we are all right.”

Mr. Truworth made no direct answer to this, but endeavoured to assume a gaiety conformable to that of the company he was in : — after some little time being past in discourse on ordinary affairs, Miss Forward took Miss Betsy into the next room to return the money she had been so kind to lend her at Mrs. Nightshade’s, and told her, she had much to say to her, but could not be so rude to leave the gentlemen for any long time. — While they were absent, which indeed was not above half a minute, “ This is a delicious girl,” said

said fir Basil to mr. Truworth, “ i’faith
 “ Charles, you will have the best of the
 “ market to-night.” — What reply mr.
 Truworth would have made is uncertain,
 — the ladies returned that instant, and
 the conversation became extremely spright-
 ly, though, on fir Basil’s part, some-
 times interspersed with expressions not al-
 together consistent with that decorum, he
 would have observed towards women of
 reputation.

Miss Betsy, far from thinking any ill
 herself, took every thing as well meant,
 and replied to whatever was uttered by
 this gay young gentleman, with a free-
 dom, which, to those who knew her not
 perfectly, might justly render her liable
 to censure. — Mr. Truworth would fain
 have taken some share, if possible, in this
 conversation, in order to conceal the per-
 plexity of his thoughts, but all his en-
 deavours were ineffectual, and though his
 words were sometimes gay, the tone with
 which he spoke them plainly shewed,
 that his heart was very far from corre-
 sponding with his expressions.

Sir Basil having ordered a handsome
 supper, miss Betsy stayed till it was over,
 and then rose up, and took her leave,
 saying, she was obliged to go home, and
 write

write some letters. — As none of them had any equipage there, a hackney coach was ordered to be called, and mr. Truworth offering to accompany her, sir Basil, on waiting on them down stairs, said to him some merry things on the occasion, which, though miss Betsy did not comprehend, her lover understood the meaning of but too well for his peace of mind.

CHAP. IX.

Is yet more interesting than the former.

ANY one may judge what a heart, possessed of so sincere and honourable a flame, as that of mr. Truworth's, must feel, to see the beloved object so intimate with a common prostitute; it shall suffice therefore to say, that his anxieties were such as prevented him from being able to recover himself enough to speak to miss Betsy on that subject, as he would do; he forbore mentioning it at all, and said very little to her on any other, while they were in the coach, and having seen her safe into mr. Goodman's house, took his leave, and went home, where he passed

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fed a night of more vexation than he ever had before experienced.

Fain would he have found some excuse for miss Betsy's conduct in this point, — fain would he have believed her innocent as she was lovely, but could not tell how to conceive there was a possibility for true virtue to take delight in the company of vice; but were there even such a thing in nature, the shew of encouraging an infamous action, he knew not how to brook in a woman he intended to make his wife.

He now acknowledged the justice of his aunt's remonstrances; and by what she levity of miss Betsy made him at present endure, foresaw what his honour and his peace of mind must hereafter continually endure, if he should once become a husband: — never were thoughts so divided, — so fluctuating as his; — his good understanding, and jealousy of honour, convinced him, there could be no lasting happiness with a person of miss Betsy's temper; but then the passion he had for her, flattered him with the hopes, that as all the faults she was guilty of, sprung rather from want of consideration than design, she might be reasoned out of them, when once he had gained so far
upon

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upon her affections, as to find he might take the liberty of painting them to her in their proper colours.

He often asked himself the question, whether he could be able to break with her or not; and finding by the pangs, which the every idea of an utter separation inflicted on him, that he could not, had no other measures to take than to submit with patience, — to appear satisfied with every thing that pleased her, and to contrive all the methods he could, without her perceiving he did so, of stealing, by gentle degrees, into her mind, a disrelish of such things as were unbecoming in her.

He had but just rose from a bed, which that night had afforded him but little repose, when he was told sir Basil Lovit, to whom he had given his directions the day before, was come to wait upon him. — Mr. Truworth was very glad of it, being impatient to undeceive him in the opinion he found he had entertained of miss Betsy. — They had not been three minutes together before the other gave him an opportunity, by some factious interrogatories concerning the transactions of the past night, and among
F 2 asked

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asked him, how he had disposed of his pretty Betsy? To all which Mr. Trueworth replied, with a very serious air, "Basil, though I must own there are many appearances to justify your mistake, yet, I hope, my word and honour will out-balance them. — I do assure you, sir, that lady, whom you think and speak so lightly of, is a woman of fortune, family, and reputation." — "I am sorry then," said Mr. Basil, very much surprised, "I treated her in the manner I did. — My Nancy, indeed," continued he, meaning Miss Forward, "told me she was virtuous, but I did not regard what she said on that score; — I know it is a trick among them to set off one another, to draw in us men: — but prithee, dear Charles, are you in earnest?" — Mr. Trueworth then, after having made a second asseveration that he was sincere in what he said, proceeded to give him some account of Miss Betsy's family, circumstances, and manner of life; adding, that nothing could be more surprising to him, than to have met her in that place; "but," said he, "she must certainly be unacquainted with the character of the woman she came to visit."

“ Such

“Such a thing might possibly happen,” replied sir Basil, “and I think you would do well to give her a hint of it.” — “Doubtless,” cried the other, “I am doubly bound so to do, first by my own honour, and next by the friendship I have for some of her kindred.” — No farther discourse passed between them on this score, and the remaining time they were together being taken up on matters altogether foreign to the business of this history, there is no occasion for making any mention of it.

Sir Basil stayed so long, that when he had taken his leave, it was too late for mr. Truworth to make a morning visit to miss Betsy, as he intended to have done, so was obliged to defer it till the afternoon, though since his first acquaintance with her, he never had felt more impatience to see her.

As he had much in his head to say to her, on the subject of the preceding day, he went as soon as he thought dinner was entirely over at mr. Goodman's, in order to have an opportunity of talking with her, before any other company came in : — she was then in her chamber dressing, but he waited not long

before she came down, and appeared more lovely and dazzling in his eyes than ever. — This happened to be the first day of her putting on a very rich, and extremely well-fancied gown, and either because it was more becoming than any of those he had seen her in before, or because of the pleasure ladies of her age and humour generally feel on such occasions, a more than usual brightness shone in her eyes, and was diffused through all her air; and after having made her some compliments on the elegance of her taste in dress, “I suppose, madam,” said he, “thus set forth, and equipped for conquest, you do not mean to stay at home this evening.” — “No, indeed,” replied she, “I am told there is a new tragedy to be acted to-night at Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields, and I would not for the world miss the first night of a new play.”

On this Mr. Truworth asked if he might have leave to wait upon her there? — “With all my heart,” answered she, “none of the gentlemen of my acquaintance know any thing of my going, so could not offer to gallant me, and there is only one lady goes with me.” — “Miss Mabel, I guess,” cried Mr. Truworth. — “No,” answered Miss Betsy,

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“ she is engaged to the other house to-
“ night, so I sent to desire the favour of
“ that lady, you saw me with last night,
“ to give me her company.”

“ You will have more if you have
“ her’s, I doubt not,” said he; “ but
“ sure, madam, you cannot think of be-
“ ing seen with a woman of her fame,
“ in a place so public-as the playhouse.”
— Miss Betsy was astonished to hear him
speak in this manner, and demanded of
him, in somewhat of a haughty tone,
what it was he meant? “ First, ma-
“ dam,” resumed Mr. Truworth, “ give
“ me leave to ask you, how long since,
“ and by what accident, your intimacy
“ with this woman commenced?” —
“ Though your interrogatories,” replied
she, “ are made in such a fashion, as
“ might well excuse me from answering
“ them, yet for once I may give you
“ the satisfaction you desire : — Miss For-
“ ward and I were together at the board-
“ ing-school, — we mutually took a lik-
“ ing to each other, I believe from a pa-
“ rity of humours and inclinations, and
“ since her coming to London have re-
“ newed that friendship we began in our
“ more tender years.”

“ Friendships begun in childhood,
 “ madam,” answered he, with a very
 grave air, “ ought to be continued or
 “ broke off, according as the parties per-
 “ severe in innocence, or degenerate into
 “ vice and infamy. — This caution ought
 “ to be more peculiarly observed in per-
 “ sons of your sex, as reputation in you
 “ once lost, is never to be retrieved. —
 “ Remember, madam, what your favou-
 “ rite author mr. Rowe says on this oc-
 “ casion :

“ In vain with tears the loss she may }
 “ deplore, }
 “ In vain look back to what she was }
 “ before, }
 “ She sets, like stars that fall, to rise }
 “ no more. }

Miss Betsy was so piqued at these re-
 monstrances, that she had scarce patience
 to contain herself, 'till he had given over
 speaking. “ Goodluck,” cried she, “ how
 “ sententious you are grown! — but, I
 “ hope, you have not the insolence to
 “ imagine I am guilty of any thing that
 “ might justly call my reputation in
 “ question?” — “ No, madam,” replied
 he, “ far be it from me to suspect you
 “ of any thoughts, but such as might be-
 “ come

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“ come the purity of angels ; — but the
“ more bright you are, the more should
“ we lament to see the native lustre of
“ your mind clouded, and blemished by
“ the faults of others. — Permit me,
“ madam, to tell you, that to continue
“ an intimacy with a woman of *miss* For-
“ ward’s character, must infallibly draw
“ you into inconveniencies, which you
“ want but to foresee to tremble at.”

“ If you have the affection for me you
“ pretend,” said she, haughtily, “ and
“ could foresee the aversion I have to a
“ censorious temper, it is yourself would
“ have cause to tremble. — I love *miss*
“ Forward, and neither know, nor will
“ believe, any ill of her. — Whenever I
“ am convinced, that she is unworthy of
“ my friendship, it must be by her own
“ actions, not by the report of others. —
“ Therefore, *mr.* Truworth, if you de-
“ sire to continue on good terms with
“ me, you must forbear to interfere with
“ what company I keep, nor pretend to
“ prescribe rules for my conduct, at
“ least till you have more right to do
“ so.”

“ I shall never, madam, presume to
“ prescribe,” replied he ; “ but shall al-
“ ways think it my duty to advise you,

“ in a matter, which so nearly concerns,
 “ not only yourself, but all who have any
 “ relation to you, either by blood or af-
 “ fection.” — Though these words, as
 well as all he had said on this occasion,
 were uttered in the most respectful accents,
 yet miss Betsy was not able to imagine
 the least contradiction suited with the
 character of a lover, was offended beyond
 all measure ; — she frowned, — rose hastily
 from her chair, — walked about the room
 in a disordered motion, — told him the
 nature of the acquaintance between them
 did not authorise the liberties he took, —
 that she would not bear it, and desired,
 that he would either leave her, or change
 the conversation to somewhat more agree-
 able.

Mr. Truworth, who as yet had said
 little, in comparison with what he intend-
 ed to say on this subject, was so much
 shocked at the impossibility he found of
 engaging her attention, that for some
 time he was incapable of speaking one
 word. — During this pause, a servant
 presented a letter to miss Betsy: — “ O!”
 cried she, as soon as she looked on the
 superscription, “ It is from my dear miss
 “ Forward ; — I hope nothing has hap-
 “ pened to prevent her going with me
 “ to the play.” — She made this excla-
 “ mation”

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. FOR
mation merely to vex mr. Truworth,
and for that purpose, also, read the billet
loud enough for him to hear what it con-
tained, which was as follows :

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ *My dear miss Betsy,*

“ SINCE I received your message, I
“ got a person to secure places for us
“ in the box, so we need not go till six
“ o’clock; but I am quite alone, and if
“ you are disengaged should be glad
“ would come directly to me, who
“ ever,

“ With the most perfect amity,

“ My dear miss Betsy,

“ Your very much obliged,

“ And humble servant,

“ A. FORWARD.”

“ Bid the messenger,” said miss Betsy
to the servant, “ tell the lady that I will
“ wait upon her this moment, — and
“ then call me a chair. — I must comply
“ with the summons I have just received,”
said she, turning to mr. Truworth, “ so
“ you must excuse my leaving you, for
“ I will not strain your complaisance to

“ accompany me where I am going ;
 “ but shall be glad to see you when you
 “ are in a better humour.”

“ I am ready, madam, to attend you
 “ any where,” said mr. Truworth, even
 “ to miss Forward’s, — and will pass the
 “ whole evening with you, if you please,
 “ in her apartment ; — but, I beseech
 “ you, do not think of going to the play
 “ with a woman of her class : — do not
 “ expose yourself in a place where so
 “ many eyes will be upon you : — reflect,
 “ for heaven’s sake, what your modesty
 “ will suffer, in seeing yourself gazed
 “ and pointed at, by those to whom she
 “ sells her favours ; — and reflect yet far-
 “ ther, what they will judge of you.”
 — “ You grow scurrilous, sir,” cried
 she, ready to burst with passion, “ I will
 “ hear no more.” — Then running to
 the door, asked if the chair was come,
 and being told it was, “ Farewell, sir,”
 said she, as she was going into it, “ when
 “ I want a spy to inspect, or a governor
 “ to direct my actions, the choice, per-
 “ haps, may fall on you.”

Mr. Truworth, who, at this treatment,
 was not quite master of himself, retorted,
 with some warmth, and loud enough to
 be heard by her, as the chairmen were
 carrying

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 109
carrying her to the steps of the house,
“ The choice, madam, perhaps, may not
“ be yours to make.” — With these
words he went hastily away, half resolv-
ing in his mind never to see her more.

~~CHAPTER X.~~

CHAP. X.

*Cannot fail of exciting compassion in
some readers, though it may move
others to laughter.*

THE few remonstrances *miss* Betsy
would vouchsafe to listen to from
mr. Truworth, had a much greater ef-
fect upon her mind, than her pride, and
the excessive homage she expected from
her lovers, would suffer to make shew of,
or than he himself imagined. — She had
too much discernment, heedless as she
was, not to know he was above any little
malicious inuendos ; but, on the contrary,
was extremely cautious in regard to the
character of whomsoever he spoke ; — she
feared therefore he had but too good
grounds for the uneasiness he expressed,
for her continuing a correspondence with
miss Forward ; — she knew that she had
been faulty, and could not be assured she
was not still so ; and it was more owing
to

to her impatience to be ascertained of the truth, than to any real resentment she had conceived against mr. Truworth, that she complied with the invitation of her now suspected friend, and resolved to put the question home to her, concerning her present manner of life, and the means by which she was supported: — she had found her removed from the lowest degree of penury and wretchedness into a state, equal to what she could have been mistress of, had she been re-established in the favour of her father; and now, for the first time, began to think it strange she should be so, from the mere bounty of a distant relation, to whom in her utmost distress she had never applied, nor even once mentioned in the recital of her melancholly history: — “ I will talk to her,” said she to herself, “ watch carefully, not only
“ the replies she makes to what I say,
“ but also her very looks, unperceiving
“ my suspicions, and if I find the least
“ room to believe what mr. Truworth
“ has insinuated, shall pity, but will
“ never see her more.”

In this prudent disposition did she enter the lodgings of miss Forward, but had no opportunity for the execution of her purpose; — some company, which she
herself

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 111

herself thought, by their behaviour, to be not of the best sort, happening to be just come before her, and departed not till it was time to go to the play. — Miss Betsy was more than once about to tell miss Forward, that she had changed her mind, and would not go; but her complaisance, as having been the person who made the first proposal, as often stopped her mouth.

In fine, they went, but the house being very full, and the fellow, who had been sent to keep places for them, going somewhat too late, they were obliged to content themselves with sitting in the third row.—This, at another time, would have been a matter of some mortification to miss Betsy; but in the humour she now was, to shew herself was the least of her care. — Never had she entered any place of publick entertainment with so little satisfaction; — mr. Truworth's words ran very much in her mind; — she had lost no part of them, and though she could not bring herself to approve of the freedom he had taken, yet, in her heart, she could not forbear confessing, that his admonitions testified the most zealous and tender care for her reputation; and if given by any one, except a
lover,

lover, would have demanded more of her thanks than her resentment.

But, alas! those serious considerations were but of short duration : — the brilliant audience, — the musick, — the moving scenes exhibited on the stage, and above all the gallantries, with which herself and miss Forward were treated, by several gay young gentlemen, who, between the acts, presented them with fruits and sweetmeats, soon dissipated all those reflections, which it was so much her interest to have cherished, and she once more relapsed into her former self.

Towards the end of the play, there were two rakes of distinction, that stuck very close to them, and when it was ended, took the liberty to invite them to sup at a tavern ; — miss Betsey started at the motion, but was very well pleased to find miss Forward shewed an equal dislike to it. — “ You will give us leave then,” cried one of the gentlemen, “ to guard you safe home, ladies ? ” — “ That I think, my dear,” said miss Forward to miss Betsey, “ may be granted, for the sake of being protected from the insults of those, who may know less how to behave towards our sex.”

Miss

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 113

Miss Betsy making no opposition, they all four went in a hackney coach to Miss Forward's lodging, it being agreed upon between them, that Miss Betsy should be set down there, and take a chair from thence to Mr. Goodman's. — Nothing indecent, nor that could be any way shocking to the most strict modesty, being offered during their passage, on their alighting from the coach at Mr. Screener's door, Miss Forward thought, that to ask them to come in would incur no censure from her fair friend, as they had behaved with so much civility and complaisance; — accordingly she did so, and they, who expected no less, took each man his lady by the hand, and immediately tript up stairs.

Miss Betsy did not presently make any offer to go home, because she thought it would appear very odd in her to leave her companion with two strange gentlemen. — She little guessed the designs they had in their heads, and doubted not but they would soon take leave; — she did, however, continue in this mistake many minutes, for one of them drew Miss Forward to a window, in order to talk to her with more privacy, that he might have the better opportunity

portunity to do so, addressed himself to miss Betfy, — “ How killing handsome
 “ you are,” said he, taking her by both
 her hands, and looking full in her face,
 “ What a pity it is you did not shine in
 “ the front to-night? By my soul you
 “ would have out-dazzled all the titled
 “ prudes about you.”

“ Pish,” replied she, “ I went to see
 “ the play, not to be seen myself.” —
 “ Not to be seen!” cried he, “ why then
 “ have you taken all this pains to empty
 “ the whole quiver of Cupid’s arrows to
 “ new point those charms you have re-
 “ ceived from nature? — Why does the
 “ jessamine, and the blooming violet
 “ play wanton in your hair? — Why is
 “ the patch with so much art placed on
 “ the corner of this ruby lip, — and here
 “ another to mark out the arched symme-
 “ try of the jetty brow? — Why does the
 “ glittering solitaire hang pendant on the
 “ snowy breast, but to attract, and allure
 “ us poor, admiring men, into a pleasing
 “ ruin?”

Miss Betfy answered this raillery in its
 kind, and as she had a great deal of ready
 wit, would soon perhaps, had the same
 strain continued, have left the beau no-
 thing to say for himself; but miss For-
 ward,

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ward, and the other gentleman having finished what they had to say, coming towards them, put an end to it. — “What do you think,” cried *Miss* Forward, “this gentleman swears he won’t go out of the house, till I give him leave to send for a supper?” — “You may do as you please,” said *Miss* Betsy, “but I must be excused from staying to partake of it.” — Whether she was really in earnest or not, is not very material, but her refusal was looked upon only as a feint, and they pressed her to tarry in such a manner, as she could not well avoid complying, even though she had been more averse, in effect, than for some time she pretended to be.

The conversation was extremely lively, and tho’ sprinkled with some double entendres, could not be said to have any thing indecent, or that could raise a blush in the faces of women who were accustomed to much company. — *Miss* Betsy had her share in all the innocent part of what was said, and laughed at that which was less so. — But not to dwell on trifles, she forgot all the cautions given her by *Mr.* Truworth, — considered not that she was in the company of two strange gentlemen, and of a woman whose character was suspected; nor, though she had a watch

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watch by her side, regarded not how the hours passed on, 'till she heard the nightly monitor of time, cry, "Past twelve o' clock, and a cloudy morning."

After this she would not be prevailed upon to stay, and desired miss Forward to send somebody for a chair. — "A chair, madam," cried that gentleman, who, of the two, had been most particular in his addresses to her, "you cannot sure imagine we should suffer you to go home alone at this late hour?" — "I apprehend no great danger," said she, "though I confess it is a thing I have not been accustomed to." — He replied, that in his company she should not begin the experiment: — on this a coach was ordered. — Miss Betsy made some few scruples at committing herself to the conduct of a person so little known to her. — "All acquaintance must have a beginning," said he, "the most intimate friends were perfect strangers at first. — You may depend upon it I am a man of honour, and cannot be capable of an ungenerous action."

Little more was said on the occasion, and being told a coach was at the door they took leave of miss Forward, and the other gentleman, and went down stairs.

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— On stepping into the coach, miss Betsy directed the man where to drive; but the gentleman, unheard by her, ordered him to go to the bagnio in Orange-street. — They were no sooner seated, and the windows drawn up, to keep out the cold, than miss Betsy was alarmed with a treatment, which her want of consideration made her little expect: — since the gentleman-commoner, at Oxford, no man had ever attempted to take the liberties which her present companion now did: — she struggled, — she repelled with all her might, the insolent pressures of his lips and hands. — “Is this,” cried she, “the honour I was to depend upon? — “Is it thus you prove yourself incapable of an ungenerous action?” — “Accuse me not,” said he, “’till you have reason. — I have been bit once, and have made a vow never to settle upon any woman while I live, again; — but you shall fare never the worse for that, — I will make you a handsome present before we part, and if you can be constant will allow you six guineas a week.”

: was so confounded at the first mention of this impudent proposal, that she lost the power of interrupting him; — covering herself, as well as she was able,

able, "Heavens!" cried she, "what means all this? — What do you take me for?" — "Take you for," answered he laughing, "prithee, dear girl, no more of these airs: — I take you for a pretty, — kind, — obliging creature, and such I hope to find you, as soon as we come into a proper place. — In the mean time," continued he, stopping her mouth with kisses, "none of this affected coyness."

The fright she was in, aided by disdain and rage, now inspired her with an unusual strength; — she broke from him, thrust down the window, — and with one breath called him monster, — villain; — with the next screamed out to the coachman to stop, and finding he regarded not her cries, would have thrown herself out, if not forcibly with-held by the gentleman, who began now to be a little startled at her resolute behaviour, — "What is all this for," said he? "would you break your neck, or venture being crushed to pieces by the wheels?" — "Any thing," cried she, bursting into tears, "I will venture, suffer any thing, rather than be subjected to insults, such as you have dared to treat me with."

Thou

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 119

Though the person by whom miss Betsy was thus dangerously attacked was a libertine, or, according to the more genteel and modish phrase, a man of pleasure, yet he wanted neither honour, nor good sense: — he had looked on miss Betsy as a woman of the town, by seeing her with one who was so; and her too great freedom in conversation, gave him no cause to alter his opinion; but the manner in which she had endeavoured to rebuff his more near approaches, greatly staggered him: — he knew not what to think, but remained in silent cogitation for some minutes, and though he held her fast clasped round the waste, it was only to prevent her from attempting the violence she had threatened, not to offer any towards her: — “Is it possible,” said he, after this pause, “that you are “virtuous?” — “I call heaven to witness,” answered she, with a voice faltering, through the excess of terror and indignation, “that I never have entertained one thought that was not strictly “so; — that I detest and scorn those “wretched creatures of the number of “whom you imagine me to be one; and “that I would sooner die the worst of “deaths, than live with infamy. — Yes, “be assured,” continued she, gathering
ing

ing more courage, “ that whatever appearances may be this fatal night against me, I am of a family of some consideration in the world, and am blest with a fortune, which sets me above the low temptations of designing men.”

As she had ended these words, they came to the bagnio, and the coach immediately stopping, two or three waiters came running to open the door, on which miss Betsy, more terrified than ever, shrieked in a most piteous manner, “ O God !” cried she, “ What’s here ? — Where am I ? — What will become of me ?” And at that instant recollected, that no help was near ; — that she was in the power of a man, whose aim was her eternal ruin ; — and that it was by her own indiscretion alone, this mischief had fallen on her, was so overcome with the dread, — the shame, — the horror, as she then supposed, of her inevitable fate, that she was very near falling into a swoon.

The gentleman discovering, by the light of the lamps at the bagnio door, the condition she was in, was truly touched with it. — “ Retire,” said he, hastily, to the fellows, “ we do not want you.” — Then throwing himself on his knees

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before her, "Let this posture, madam," continued he, "obtain your pardon, and at the same time ease you of all apprehensions on my score."—"May I believe you?" said she, still weeping.—"You may," replied he; then rising, and placing himself on the seat opposite to her,—"I love my pleasures, and think it no crime to indulge the appetites of nature.—I am charmed with the kind free woman, but I honour and revere the truly virtuous, and it is a maxim with me never to attempt the violation of innocence.—These, madam, are my principles in regard to your sex;—but to convince you further,—Here, fellow," continued he to the coachman, who was walking backwards and forwards at some distance,—"get up into your box, and drive where you were first directed."

Miss Betsy acknowledged the generosity of this behaviour, and, on his asking by what accident it had happened, that he found her in company with a woman of miss Forward's character, she told him ingenuously the truth,—that they knew each other when children in the country; but that she had not seen

G - ing

ing to London, and was entirely ignorant of her conduct from that time.

He then took the liberty of reminding her, that a young lady more endangered her reputation, by an acquaintance with one woman of ill fame, than by receiving the visits of twenty men, though professed libertines. — To which she replied, that for the future she should be very careful what company she kept, of both sexes.

This was the sum of the conversation, that passed between them during their little stage to mr. Goodman's, where being safely arrived, after having seen her within the doors, he saluted her with a great deal of respect, and took his leave,



CHAP. XI.

shows what effects the transactions of the preceding night had on the minds of miss Betsy and mr. Trueworth.

MR. Goodman and lady Mellasin were gone to bed when miss Betsy came me; but miss Flora sat up for her, in complaisance as she pretended, but in reality to see who it was came home to her. — This malicious creature had been extremely fawning, for some days past, to miss Betsy; but this night was more so than usual, doubtless, in the hope of being able to draw something out of her, which her cruel wit might turn to her disadvantage; but the other knew too well the dispositions she had towards her, to communicate any thing to her, which she would not wish should be made pub-

Never did any one pass a night in greater inquietudes, than this young lady did; and she felt them the more as she had no friend, to whom she would suffer her to im-

— she looked back with

horror on the precipice she had fallen into, and considered it as a kind of miracle, that she had recovered from it unhurt; — she could not reflect on what had passed, that by the levity of her conduct she had been thought a common prostitute, had been treated as such, and preserved from irrecoverable ruin, by the meer mercy of a man, who was a perfect stranger to her, without feeling anew that confusion, which the most shocking moments of her distress inflicted. — The most bitter of her enemies could not have passed censures more severe than she did on herself, and in this fit of humiliation, and repentance, would even have asked mr. Truëworth pardon for the little regard she had paid to his advice.

The agitations of her mind would not suffer her to take one moment of repose for the whole night, nor did the morning afford any more tranquility: — the disturbance of her heart flew up into her head, and occasioned so violent a pain there, that she was as unable as unwilling to get out of bed. — She lay 'till some hours after the time in which they usually breakfasted, nor would take any refreshment, though the tea was brought to her bedside. — Amongst the crowd of tormenting ideas, the remembrance, that she

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all the vexation she laboured under, entirely to the acquaintance she had with miss Forward, came strong into her thoughts, and she had not rose the whole day, if not moved to it by the impatience of venting her spleen on that unfortunate woman, which she did, in a letter to her containing these lines :

To miss FORWARD.

I AM sorry that the compassion, which your feigned contrition for one false step obliged me to take in your misfortunes, should make you imagine I would continue any conversation with you, after knowing you had abandoned yourself to a course of life, which I blush to think any of my sex can descend to brook the thoughts of, much more to be guilty of. — If you had retained the least spark of generosity, or good-will towards me, you would rather have avoided than coveted my company, as you must be sensible that to be seen with you must render me, in some measure, partaker of your infamy, though wholly innocent of your crimes. — How base, — how cruel is such a behaviour, especially to one, who had the most tender regard for you, even after you had confessed yourself unworthy of it ;

‘ — but I have been often told, and now
‘ I find the observation just, that women
‘ of your wretched principles, being lost
‘ to all hope of happiness themselves,
‘ take a malicious pleasure in endeavour-
‘ ing to destroy it in others.

‘ But, for heaven’s sake, what could
‘ induce you to desire a continuation of
‘ a correspondence with me? — What
‘ did you take me for? — Did you ima-
‘ gine me so blind, as not to see into
‘ the shameful means by which you are
‘ supported, or so weak as to forfeit all
‘ the reputation and respect I have in the
‘ world, merely to comply with your re-
‘ quest. — No! — your conduct is too
‘ barefaced, to give me even the shadow
‘ of an excuse for ever seeing you again:
‘ do not, therefore, go about to varnish
‘ over actions, whose foulness will appe-
‘ ar through all the colours you can da-
‘ rten them with. — The friendship I once had
‘ for you has already pleaded all that
‘ yourself could urge in your defence,
‘ but the cause is too bad, and I must
‘ leave you to the miseries which attend
‘ remorse, and which a little time will
‘ infallibly bring on. — Heavens!
‘ a common prostitute! — To earn
‘ your precarious bread by being the
‘ every man’s licentious will. —

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‘ digging in the mines! — What is
‘ begging! — What is starving, when
‘ compared to this? — But the idea is
‘ too shocking, — modesty shudders at it,
‘ — I shall drive both that and you as
‘ distant from my thoughts as possible,
‘ so be assured this is the last time you
‘ will ever hear from the.

‘ Much deceived,

‘ And ill-treated,

‘ B. THOUGHTLESS.’

She was just going to seal up the above letter, when a sudden thought coming into her head, she added, to what she had already wrote, this postscript:

‘ P.S. You may perhaps be instigated to
‘ answer this, either through resent-
‘ ment for the reproaches it contains,
‘ or through some remains of modesty,
‘ to attempt an apology for the occa-
‘ sion; but I would not wish you should
‘ give yourself that trouble, for be as-
‘ sured I shall read nothing that comes
‘ from you, and that whatever you
‘ send, will be returned to you again
‘ unopened.’

She immediately sent this away by a porter, and having satisfied the dictates of her indignation against miss Forward, she had now done with her, and resolved to think of her no more; — yet was the confusion of her mind far from being dissipated. — “What will mr. Trueworth say,” cried she to herself, “if ever
“the ridiculous adventure of last night
“should reach his ears, as nothing is
“more probable, than that it may? —
“What will my brother Frank say, on
“hearing such a story? — What mr.
“Goodman and lady Mellasin say? —
“What a triumph for the envious miss
“Flora? — And what can I answer for
“myself, either to my friends, or ene-
“mies?”

Little care as this young lady had seemed to have taken of her reputation, it was notwithstanding very dear to her. — Honour was yet still more dear, and she could not reflect, that what she had done might call the one in question, and how near she had been to having the other irrecoverably lost, without feeling the most bitter agonies; she was not able to dress, or to go down stairs that day, and gave orders to be denied to whoever should come to visit her.

In this perplexed situation of mind let us leave her for a while, and see with what sort of temper mr. Truworth behaved, after having seen her go to the very woman he had so much conjured her to avoid.

All the love he had for her, would not keep him from resenting this last rebuff; — he thought he had not deserved such usage, nor that his having professed himself her lover, gave her the privilege of treating him as her slave: — the humour he was in making him unfit for company, he went directly to his lodgings; but had not been long there before it came into his head, that possibly the manner in which she had behaved was only a fit of contradiction, and, that after all, she might, when she was out of hearing, have given counter-orders to the chairmen; and was neither gone to miss Forward's, nor would accompany her to the play. — With such vain imaginations does love sometimes flatter its votaries, and the sincere and ardent flame, which filled the heart of mr. Truworth, made him greedily catch at every supposition, in favour of the darling object.

Willing, however, to be more assured, he bethought him of a stratagem, which would either relieve all the doubts remaining in him of her obstinacy, or convince him, they were but too just: — he sent immediately to his barber for a black perriwig, and muffled up in a cloak, so as to render it almost an impossibility for him to be known by any one, went to the theatre, and with a heart divided betwixt hope and fear, placed himself in a part of the middle gallery, which had the full command of more than half the boxes; — he saw a very brilliant circle, but not the whom he so much dreaded to find shine among them.

Having scrutinously examined all within the reach of his view, he quitted his present post, and removed to the other side of the house, where he soon discovered the persons he came in search of: — he saw miss Forward earnest in discourse with a gentleman that sat behind her, and miss Betsy receiving fruit from another, with the same freedom and gaiety of deportment she could have done, if presented by himself; — he saw the nods, — the winks, — and the grimaces, which several in the pit made to each other, when looking towards these two ladies.

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very moment brought with it some fresh matter for his mortification, yet would not his curiosity stop here. — When the play was ended, he went hastily down stairs, and mingled with the crowd that stood about the door, in hope of seeing Miss Betsy quit her company, take a chair, and go home; — but how cruel a stab was it to a man, who loved as he did, to find her go with her dissolute companion, and two gentlemen, who, he had reason to believe, by the little he saw of their behaviour, were utter strangers to her, into a hackney coach; — he was once about to appear himself through his disguise, and tell Miss Betsy, that he thought he had more right to the honour of conducting her, than those to whom she gave permission; but the greatness of his spirit assisted his prudence, in restraining him from so rash an action.

After this sight, it is not in the power of words to represent what it was he felt. Reason was too weak to combat against the force of such various emotions, as for some time had the entire possession of his soul; — he thought Miss Betsy unworthy of his love, yet still he loved her, and had she been witness of his present distressed state, she would have seen the power she had over him, no less manifest

in the moments of his rage, than in those in which he had behaved with the greatest tenderness and respect.

His good sense, however, at last convinced him, that as no solid happiness could be expected with a woman of miss Betsy's temper, he ought to conquer his passion for her. — This he resolved to attempt, yet thought before he did so, it would become him to see her once more, — to argue gently with her, and try, at least, if there were not a possibility of making her see the errors she was guilty of.

With this intent he went the next day to visit her, but being told she could see no company that day, was going from the door, when miss Flora, who had watched for him at the parlour window, came and desired him to walk in; — his complaisance would not permit him to refuse her request, and after the usual compliments, said, he was sorry miss Betsy was so ill. — “You need not be in much pain,” replied she, with a look which he thought had more than an ordinary meaning in it, “she is not greatly indisposed.” — “Perhaps,” cried Mr. Truworth, with some warmth, “she is only so to me,” — “I cannot

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“ say any thing to that,” returned miss Flora, “ but her orders were in general
“ to all that came; and I believe, in-
“ deed, she is not perfectly well, — she
“ came home extremely late last night,
“ and seemed in a good deal of disorder.”
— “ Disorder, madam,” interrupted mr. Trueworth, impatiently, “ for heaven’s
“ sake, on what occasion?” — “ I wish
“ I could inform you,” answered she;
“ but at present I am not favoured with
“ her confidence, though there was a
“ time, when I was made partaker of
“ her dearest secrets: — I wish those she
“ now intrusts them with, may be no less
“ faithful to her than I have been.” — “ I
“ hope,” said he, “ she has none which to
“ be betrayed in would give her pain.” —
With these words he rose up to go away,
— miss Flora fain would have perswaded
him to drink tea; but he excused himself,
saying, he was engaged, — that he came
only to enquire after the health of her
fair friend, and could not have stayed,
if so happy as to have seen her.

Scarce could this passionate lover con-
tain himself, ’till he got out of the house:
— the manner in which miss Flora had
spoke of miss Betsy, added fresh fuel to
the jealousies he was before possessed of;
how great soever his disturbance was,
he

he found on his return home, somewhat which made all he had known before seem light and trifling.

C H A P. XII.

Contains some passages, which, 'tis probable, will afford more pain than pleasure, yet are very pertinent to the history, and necessary to be related.

THOUGH the words which miss Flora had let fall to mr. Truworth, concerning miss Betsy, seemed as if spoken by meer chance, there was couched under them, a design of the most black and villainous kind, that ever entered the breast of woman, as will presently appear to the astonishment of every reader.

In order to do this, we must relate an incident in miss Betsy's life, not hitherto mentioned, and which happened some little time before her going to Oxford, with her brother Frank.

On her first coming to town, a woman had been recommended to her for star

ing, and making up her fine linnen : — this person she had ever since employed, and took a great fancy to, as she found her honest, industrious, and very obliging. — The poor creature was unhappily married, — her husband was gone from her, and had list'd himself for a soldier ; — being born in a distant county, she had no relations to whom she could apply for assistance, — was big with child, and had no support but the labour of her hands. — These calamitous circumstances so much touched the commiserative nature of miss Betsy, that she frequently gave her double the sum she demanded for her work, besides bestowing on her many things she left off wearing, which, though trifles in themselves, were very helpful to a person in such distress.

Miss Mabel, for whom she also worked at the same time, was no less her patroness, than miss Betsy. — In fine, they were both extremely kind to her, in so much as made her often cry out, in a transport of gratitude, that these two good young ladies were worth to her all the customers she had besides : — they continued to prove themselves so, indeed ; for when her child was born, which happened to be a girl, they stood god-mo- and not only gave handsomely them-

themselves, but raised a contribution among their acquaintance, for the support of the lying-in woman and her infant; the former, however, did not long enjoy the blessing of two such worthy friends, — she died before the expiration of her month, and the latter being wholly destitute, was about to be thrown upon the parish; — some well-disposed neighbour, who knew how kind miss Mabel and miss Betsy had been, came and acquainted them with the melancholly story; — they consulted together, and each reflecting, that she had undertaken the protection of this infant at the font, thought herself bound by duty to preserve it from those hardships with which children thus exposed, are sometimes treated: — they, therefore, as they were equally engaged, agreed to join equally in the maintenance of this innocent forelorn.

This was a rare charity indeed, and few there are, especially at their years, who so justly consider the obligations of a baptismal covenant. — It was also the more to be admired, as neither of them had the incomes of their fortunes in their own hands, the one being under guardianship, and the other at the allowance of a father, who, though rich, was extremely avaritious.

As they were therefore obliged to be good œconomists in this point, and nurses in the country are to be had at a much cheaper rate than in town, they got a person to seek out for one, who would not be unreasonable in her demands, and at the same time do justice to her charge. — Such a one, according to the character given of her by neighbours, being found, the child decently cloathed, was sent down to her habitation, which was in a little village about seventeen miles from London. — For the sake of concealing the part *miss* Mabel had in this affair from the knowledge of her father, it was judged proper that *miss* Betsy should seem to take the whole upon herself, which she did, and the nurse's husband came up every month, and received the money from her hands, as also whatever other necessaries the child wanted.

Who would imagine, that such a glorious act of benevolence should ever be made a handle to traduce and villify the author? — yet what cannot malice, accompanied with cunning, do? — It can give the fairest virtue the appearance of the foulest vice, and pervert the just estimation of the world into a mistaken scorn and contempt.

Miss

Miss Flora, after receiving the disappointment, as related in the sixth chapter in this volume, was far from desisting from the wicked design she had conceived of putting an end to the intercourse between miss Betsy and mr. Truworth: — her fertile brain presented her with a thousand stratagems, which she rejected, either as they were too weak to accomplish what she wished, or too liable to discovery, till at last she hit upon the most detestable project of representing what proceeded from the noblest propensity of miss Betsy's nature, as the effect of a criminal compulsion; — in fine, to make it appear so feasible, as to be believed, that the child who owed half its maintainance to her charity was entirely kept by herself, and the offspring of her own body.

Having well weighed and deliberated on this matter, it seemed to her such as mr. Truworth, on the most strict examination, could not discover the deception of; — she therefore resolved to pursue it, and accordingly wrote the following letter :

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TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ *Sir,*

‘ THE friendship I had for some of
‘ your family, now deceased, and
‘ the respect due to your own character
‘ in particular, obliges me to acquaint
‘ you with truths more disagreeable than
‘ perhaps you ever yet have heard; —
‘ but before I proceed to the shocking
‘ narrative, let me conjure you to be-
‘ lieve, that in me your better angel
‘ speaks, and warns you to avoid that
‘ dreadful gulph of everlasting misery,
‘ into which you are just ready to be
‘ plunged.

‘ I am informed, by those who are
‘ most versed in your affairs, and on whose
‘ veracity I may depend, that a treaty of
‘ marriage is on foot, and almost as good
‘ as concluded, between you and miss
‘ Betsy Thoughtless. — A young lady,
‘ I must confess, well descended, — hand-
‘ some, and endued with every accom-
‘ plishment to attract the admiration of
‘ mankind, and if her soul had the least
‘ conformity with her exterior charms,
‘ doubtless, might have been one of
‘ the most happy, and most envied man-
‘ ners; — but, sir, this seeming in-
‘ nocence

• nocence is all a cheat, — another has
 • been before-hand with you, in the joys
 • you covet ; — your intended bride has
 • been a mother without the pleasure of
 • owning herself as such. — The product
 • of a shameful passion is still living, and
 • though she uses the greatest caution in
 • this affair, I have by accident discovered,
 • is now nursed at Denham, a small vil-
 • lage, within too miles of Uxbridge,
 • by a gardener's wife, who is called by
 • the country people, goody Bushman.
 • — I give you this particular account,
 • in order that you may make what en-
 • quiry you shall think proper into a fact,
 • which I am sorry to say, you will find
 • but too real. — I pity from my soul the
 • unfortunate seduced young lady, —
 • she must be doubly miserable, if by
 • having lost her virtue, she loses a hus-
 • band such as you ; — but if after this
 • you should think fit to prosecute your
 • pretensions, I wish she may endeavour,
 • by her future conduct, to atone for
 • the errors of the past ; — but alas ! her
 • present manner of behaviour, affords no
 • such promising expectations ; and if you
 • should set your honour and fortune, and
 • all that is dear to you, against so pre-
 • carious a stake, as the hope of reclaim-
 • ing a woman of her temper, it ~~will~~
 • certainly fill all your friends with ~~ast~~
 • nishment

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‘ nishment and grief; — but you are your-
‘ self the best judge of what it will be-
‘ come you to do, — I only beg, that
‘ you will be assured this intelligence
‘ comes from one, who is,

‘ With the utmost sincerity,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your well-wisher,

‘ And most humble,

‘ Though unknown, servant.’

She would not trust the success of the mischief she intended by this letter, ’till she had examined and re-examined every sentence, and finding it altogether such as she thought would work the desired effect, got one, who was always her ready agent, in matters of this kind, to copy it over, in order to prevent any accident from discovering the real author, and then sent it as directed by the penny-post.

How far the event answered her expectations shall very shortly be related, but accidents of another nature, requiring the first mentioned, the gratification of that

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that curiosity, which this may have excited, must for a while be deferred.

CH A P. XIII.

Is the recital of some accidents, as little possible to be foreseen by the reader, as they were by the persons to whom they happened.

IN youth, when the blood runs high, and the spirits are in full vivacity, affliction must come very heavy indeed, when it makes any deep or lasting impression on the mind. — That vexation which miss Betsy had brought upon herself, by going to the play with miss Forward, was severe enough the whole night, and the ensuing day. — A great while, it must be confessed, for a person of her volatile disposition, and when the more violent emotions had subsided, the terror she had lately sustained, had, at least, this good effect upon her, it made her resolve to take all possible precautions not to fall into the like danger again. — As she had an infinite deal of generosity in her nature, when not obscured by that pride and vanity which the flatterers had been but too much accustomed

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had inspired her with, she could not reflect how ill she had treated mr. Trueworth, and the little regard she had paid to the tender concern he had shewn for her reputation, without thinking she ought to ask his pardon, and acknowledge she had been in the wrong. — If mr. Trueworth could have known the humour she was at present in, how readily would he have flown to her with all the wings of love and kind forgiveness; but as he had not the spirit of divination, and could only judge of her sentiments by her behaviour, it was not in his power to conceive how great a change had happened in his favour, through a just sensibility of her own error.

She, in the mean time, little imagined how far he resented the treatment she had given him, especially as she heard he had been to wait upon her the day in which she saw no company, and after having past a night of much more tranquility than the former had been, went down in the morning to breakfast, with her usual cheerfulness; — she had not been many minutes in the parlour, before she was agreeably surprized with the sight of her brother, mr. Francis Thoughtless, who it seems, had arrived the night before. — After the first welcomes were over,

over, mr. Goodman asked him, Wherefore he did not come directly to his house? saying, he had always a spare bed to accommodate a friend: — To which the other replied, that he had come from Paris with some company, whom he could not quit, and that they had lain at the Hummums. — Miss Betsy was extremely transported at his return, and said a thousand obliging things to him, all which he answered with more politeness than tenderness, and this young lady soon perceived by this specimen of his carriage to her, that she was not to expect the same affection from him, as she had received so many proofs of from her younger brother.

His long absence from England, and some attachments he had found abroad, had, indeed, very much taken off that warmth of kindness he would, doubtless, otherwise have felt for an only sister, and one who appeared so worthy of his love. — As mr. Goodman had acquainted him by letter, that he had hired a house for him, according to his request, the chief of their conversation turned on that subject, and as soon as breakfast was over, they took a walk together to see it; — on their return he seemed very pleased with the choice mr. Goodman had

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made, and the little time he stayed was entirely taken up with consulting lady Mellasin, his sister, and miss Flora, concerning the manner in which he should ornament it; for the honest guardian had taken care to provide all such furniture, as he thought would be necessary for a single gentleman.

No intreaties were wanting to prevail on him, to make that house his home, till his own was thoroughly aired, and in all respects fit for him to go into; but he excused himself, saying, he could not leave the friends he had travelled with, till they were provided for as well as himself, nor could all Mr. Goodman, and the ladies urge, persuade him to dine with them that day.

It must be acknowledged, that this positive refusal of every thing that was desired of him, had not in it all that complaisance, which might have been expected from a person just come from among a people more famous for their politeness, than their sincerity.

But he had his own reasons, which the family of Mr. Goodman as yet were far from suspecting, which made him act in a manner he now did; and it was not,

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in

in reality, the want of French breeding, but the want of true old English resolution, that enforced this seeming negligence and abruptness.

After he was gone, mr. Goodman went to 'Change, but was scarce entered into the walk, where he had appointed to meet some merchants, when he was accosted by two rough ill-looking fellows, who demanded his sword, and told him, they had a writ against him, — that he was their prisoner, and must go with them.

Mr. Goodman, who had as little reason as any man living to suspect an insult of this nature, only smiled, and told them, they were mistaken in the person. — “No, no,” said one of them, “we are right enough, if you are mr. Samuel Goodman.” — “My name is Samuel Goodman,” replied he; “but I do not know that it stands in any man's books for debt; — but pray,” continued he, “at whose suit am I arrested?” — “At the suit of mr. Oliver Marplus,” said the other officer. — “I have no dealings with any such person,” cried mr. Goodman, “nor even ever heard the name of him you mention.” — They then told him,

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his business to prove that, — they did but do their duty, and he must obey the writ. — Mr. Goodman on this, knowing they were not the persons with whom this matter should be contested, readily went where they conducted him, which was to a house belonging to him who appeared to be principal of the two. — As they were coming off 'Change, he had his coachman drive his chariot home, and tell his lady, that he believed he should not dine with her that day; but he kept his footman with him, to send on what messages he should find convenient.

The officer, knowing his condition, and not doubting but he should have a handsome present for civility-money, used him with a great deal of respect, when he had got him into his house; and, on his desiring to be informed of the lawyer's name, employed in the action, he immediately told him, and also for what sum he was arrested, which was no less than two thousand, five hundred, and seventy-five pounds, eight shillings. — “A pretty parcel of money truly,” said Mr. Goodman, “I wonder in what dream I contracted this debt.” — He then called for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a line to his lawyer in the Temple, desiring him to go to the other, who, they said,

was concerned against him, and find out the truth of this affair.

The honest old gentleman having sent this letter by his servant, called for something to eat, and was extremely facetious and pleasant with the officers, not doubting but that what had happened was occasioned through some mistake or other, and he should immediately be discharged, when the thing was enquired into; — but his present good humour was changed into one altogether the reverse, when his own lawyer, accompanied by him who was engaged for his adversary, came to him, and told him, there was no remedy but to give bail; — that the suit commenced against him, was on account of a bond given by lady Mellasin to mr. Oliver Marplus, some few days previous to her marriage. — 'Tis hard to say, whether surprize or rage was most predominant in the soul of this much-injured husband, at so shocking a piece of intelligence. — He demanded to see the bond, which request being granted, he found it, not as he at first flattered himself, a forgery, but signed with his wife's own hand, and witnessed by mrs. Prinks her woman, and another person whom he knew not,

It is certain, that no confusion ever exceeded that of Mr. Goodman's, at this time ; — he sat like one transfixed with thunder, and was wholly incapable of uttering one syllable ; — he appeared to the company as lost in thought ; but was indeed almost past the power of thinking, till his lawyer roused him with these words, — “ Come, sir,” said he, “ you see how the case stands, — there is no time to be lost, — you must either pay the money down, or get immediate security ; for I suppose you would not chuse to lie here to-night.” — This seasonable admonition brought him a little to himself : — he now began to reflect what it would best become him to do, and after a pause of some moments, “ I believe,” said he, “ that I have now in my house more than the sum in bills, that would discharge this bond, but I would willingly hear what this woman has to say before I pay the money, and will therefore give in bail.” — Accordingly he sent for two citizens of great worth and credit, to desire them to come to him ; — they instantly complied with this summons, and the whole affair being repeated to them, voluntarily offered to be his sureties.

Bail bonds were easily procured, but it took up so much time in filling them up, and discharging the fees, and other consequential expences, that it was past one o'clock before all was over, and mr. Goodman had liberty to return to his own habitation.

It was very seldom that mr. Goodman stayed late abroad; but whenever any thing happened that obliged him to do so, lady Mellasin, through the great affection she pretended to have for him, would never go to bed till his return. — Mrs. Prinks for the most part was her sole companion in such cases; but it so fell out, that this night neither of the two young ladies had any inclination to sleep: — miss Flora's head was full of the abovementioned plot, and the anxiety for its success; — the remembrance of the late adventure at miss Forward's, was not yet quite dissipated in miss Betsy; — the coldness with which she imagined herself treated by her elder brother, with whom she had flattered herself of living, and being very happy under his protection, gave her a good deal of uneasiness. — To add to all these matters of disquiet, she had also received that afternoon a letter from mr. Francis Thoughtless, acquainting her,

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that he had had the misfortune to be so much bruised by a fall he got from his horse, that it was utterly impossible for him to travel, and she must not expect him in town yet for some days.

The ladies were all together, sitting in the parlour, each chusing rather to indulge her own private meditations, than to hold discourse with the others, when Mr. Goodman came home. — Lady Mel-lasin ran to embrace him with a shew of the greatest tenderness, — “ My dear Mr. “ Goodman,” cried she, “ how much “ have I suffered from my fears, lest “ some ill accident should have befallen “ you !” — “ The worst that could have “ happened has befallen me,” replied he, thrusting her from him ; “ yet no more “ than what you might very reason- “ ably expect would one day or another “ happen.” — “ What do you mean, “ my dear,” said she, more alarmed at his words and looks than she made shew of ? — “ You may too easily inform your- “ self what ’tis I mean,” cried he, hastily, “ on the retrospect of your behaviour. “ — I now find, but too late, how much “ I have been imposed upon. — Did you “ not assure me,” continued he, some- what more mildly, “ that you were free “ from all incumbrances but that girl, “ whom,

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“ whom, since our marriage, I have ten-
 “ dered as my own ?” — And then per-
 ceiving she answered nothing, but looked
 pale and trembled, he repeated to her the
 affront he had received, “ which,” said
 he, “ in all my dealings in the world,
 “ would never have happened, but on
 “ your account.”

Though lady Mellasin had as much ar-
 tifice, and the power of dissimulation, as
 any of her sex, yet she was at a loss thus
 taken unprepared. — she hesitated, — she
 stammered, and fain would have denied
 the having given any such bond ; but
 finding the proofs too plain against her,
 she threw herself at his feet, — wept, and
 conjured him to forgive the only decep-
 tion she had practised on him : — “ It
 “ was a debt,” said she, “ contracted by
 “ my former husband, which I knew not
 “ of. — I thought the effects he left be-
 “ hind him were more than sufficient to
 “ have discharged whatever obligations
 “ he lay under, and foolishly took out
 “ letters of administration. — The demand
 “ of Marplus came not upon me till some
 “ time after, — I then inconsiderately
 “ gave him my own bond, which he
 “ however promised not to put in force
 “ without previously acquainting me.”

This excuse was too weak, as well as all the affection Mr. Goodman had for her, to pacify the emotions of his just indignation. — “And pray,” cried he, in a voice divided between scorn and anger, “of what advantage would it have been to me your being previously acquainted with it? — Could you have paid the money without robbing, or defrauding me? — No, madam,” continued he, “I shall for the future give credit to nothing you can say, and as I cannot be assured that this is the only misfortune I have to dread on your account, shall consider what steps I ought to take for my defence.”

In speaking these words he rung the bell for a servant, and ordered that bed, to which he had invited Mr. Thoughtless, should that instant be made ready for himself. — All the tears and intreaties of Lady Mellasin were in vain, to make him recede from his resolution of lying alone that night; and as soon as he was told his orders were obeyed, he flung out of the room, saying, — “Madam, perhaps, we never more may meet between a pair of sheets.” — Whether at that time he was determined to carry his resentment so far, or not, is uncertain, but

what happened very shortly after, left him no other part to take, than that which he had threatened.

~~CHAPTERS OF THE HISTORY OF THE~~

CHAP. XIV.

Gives a full explanation of some passages, which hitberto have seemed very dark and mysterious.

THIS was a night of great confusion in mr. Goodman's family: — lady Mellasin either was, or pretended to be, in fits; — miss Flora was called up soon after she went to bed, but mr. Goodman himself would not be prevailed upon to rise, though told the condition his wife was in, and that she begged with the utmost earnestness to see him.

This behaviour in a husband lately so tender and affectionate, is a proof, not only that the greatest love once turned degenerates into its reverse, but also that the sweetest temper, when too much provoked by injuries, is not always the most easy to be reconciled. — The perfect trust he had put in lady Mellasin, — the implicit faith he had given to all she said, — and

the dependance he had on the love she had professed for him, made the deception she was now convicted of appear in worse colours, than otherwise it would have done.

The more he reflected on this ugly affair, the more he was convinced of the hypocrisy of his wife, in whom he had placed such confidence. — “ We have
“ been married near five years,” said he, to himself ; “ how comes it to pass, that
“ the penalty of this bond was not in so
“ long a time demanded ? — It must be
“ that she has kept it off by large interest,
“ and forbearance-money, and who knows
“ how far my credit may be endangered
“ for the raising of it ? — ’Tis likely,
“ that while I thought every thing ne-
“ cessary for my family was purchased
“ with ready money, I may stand in-
“ debted to all the tradesmen this wick-
“ ed woman has had any dealings with ;
“ — nay, I cannot even assure myself,
“ that other obligations of the same kind
“ with this I have already suffered for,
“ may not some time or other call upon
“ me for their discharge.”

With these disturbed meditations, in-
stead of sleep, did he pass what was re-
maining of the night, when he went to

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bed; yet he arose the next day full as early as he was accustomed to do, after having enjoyed the best repose.

The first thing he did was to fend for as many of those trades-people, as he either knew himself, or his servants could inform him, had at any time sent goods into his house. — On their presenting themselves before him, he found, more to his vexation than surprise, for he now expected the worst, that all of them, even to those who supplied his kitchen, had bills of a long standing: — he discharged all their several demands directly, and having taken a receipt in full from each of them, desired they would henceforward suffer no goods to be left within his doors without the value being paid on the delivery.

Mr. Goodman had just dispatched the last of these people, when he was told a woman begged leave to speak to him: — “Another creditor, I suppose,” said he, and then ordered she should come in. — As soon as she did so, — “Well, mistress,” cried he, seeing her a woman of a very plain appearance, — “what is it you require of me?” — “Nothing, sir,” replied she, “but that you will permit me to acquaint you with a
“ thing.

“ thing, which it very much concerns
“ you to be informed of?” — “ I should
“ otherwise be an enemy to myself,” re-
sumed he, “ therefore pray speak what
“ you have to say ?”

‘ I am, sir,’ said she, ‘ the unfortu-
‘ nate wife of one of the most wicked
‘ men upon earth, and by my being so
‘ have been compelled to be in some
‘ measure accessary to the injustice you
‘ have sustained ; but I hope what I have
‘ to reveal will atone for my transgres-
‘ sion.’ — Mr Goodman then desired she
would sit down, and without any farther
prelude proceed to the business she came
upon.

‘ The sum of what I have to relate,’
rejoined she, ‘ is, that the bond, on
‘ which you were yesterday arrested, and
‘ for the payment of which you have gi-
‘ ven security, is no more than an impu-
‘ dent fraud ;, but the particulars, that
‘ prove it such, cannot but be very dis-
‘ pleasing to you ; however I shall make
‘ no apology for relating them, as the
‘ perfect knowledge of the whole tran-
‘ saction may put you in a way to pre-
‘ vent all future injuries of the like na-

“ My

‘ My husband, whose name is Oliver
‘ Marplus,’ continued she, ‘ had the ho-
‘ nour of waiting on a nobleman belong-
‘ ing to court, when sir Simon Mellasin
‘ had a post there : — his lady, now un-
‘ happily yours, took a fancy to him,
‘ and entered into a criminal conversation
‘ with him, some time before her hus-
‘ band’s death, and has ever since, unless
‘ very lately broke off, continued it. On
‘ my first discovering it, he begged me
‘ to be easy, and reminded me, that as
‘ he had nothing at present to depend
‘ upon, having lost his place, but her
‘ ladyship’s bounty, I ought to wink at
‘ it, and be content that she should share
‘ his person, since I shared in the benefits
‘ arising from their intercourse. — I
‘ knowing his temper too well, not to
‘ know that any opposition I could make
‘ would be in vain, and seeing no other
‘ remedy, was obliged to feign a consent
‘ to what the love I then had for him
‘ rendered most terrible to me. — Thus
‘ we went on, her ladyship still supply-
‘ ing him with money for our support,
‘ till he being informed, that her mar-
‘ riage with you was near being consu-
‘ mated, he bethought himself of a f
‘ tagem to prevent the change of

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condition from depriving him of the continuance of her favour. — It was this :

Their private meetings were always in the Savoy, at a house of my husband's chusing for that purpose, the master of it being his intimate friend and companion. — Myself, and two men, whom he made privy to the plot, and were to personate officers of justice, were to be concealed in the next room to the lovers, and as soon as we found they were in bed, burst open the door, rush in, and catch them in the very act of shame.

All this was executed according as it was contrived; — my husband jumped out of bed, pretended to struggle with the sham constables, and swore he would murder me. — I acted my part, as they since told me, to the life, — seemed a very fury, and said I did not care what became of me, if I was but revenged upon my rival. — Lady Mellasin tore her hair, wept, and intreated me in the most abject terms to forgive, and not expose a woman of her rank to public scorn and infamy. — To which I replied, that it was not her quality should protect her; — I loaded her with the
most

‘ most inveterate reproaches I could think
‘ of. — Indeed, there required not much
‘ study for my doing so, for I heartily
‘ hated her. — After some time passed in
‘ beseechings on her side, and railings on
‘ mine, one of the pretended constables
‘ took me aside, as if to persuade me to
‘ more moderation, while the other talk-
‘ ed to her, and insinuated as if a sum
‘ of money might compromise the mat-
‘ ter. — My husband also told her, that
‘ though he detested me for what I had
‘ done, yet he wished her ladyship, for
‘ her own sake, would think of some
‘ way to pacify me; — for,’ said he, ‘ a
‘ wife in these cases has great power.’

‘ The terror she was in of appearing
‘ before a civil magistrate, and of being
‘ liable to suffer that punishment the law
‘ inflicts upon an adulteress, and conse-
‘ quently the loss of all her hopes of a
‘ marriage with you, sir, made her readi-
‘ ly agree to do any thing I should re-
‘ quire. — I seemed quite averse for a
‘ good while to listen to any terms of
‘ accommodation, but at length affected
‘ to be overcome by the persuasions of
‘ the men I brought with me, and her
‘ promise of allowing us a very handsome
‘ support, as soon as she became your
‘ wife, and should have it in her power.

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‘ — This I made slight on, and told her,
‘ that I would not depend upon her pro-
‘ mise for any thing. — It was then pro-
‘ posed, that she should give a bond for
‘ a large sum of money to mr. Marplus.
‘ — ‘ That you may do with safety,’
‘ said he to her; ‘ as I shall have it in
‘ my own hands, and you may be assured
‘ will never put it in force to your pre-
‘ judice.’

‘ In fine, sir,’ continued mrs. Marplus,
‘ she agreed to this proposal, and as it
‘ was then too late for the execution of
‘ what she had promised, on her making
‘ a solemn vow to fulfil it punctually
‘ the next day, I told her, she was at li-
‘ berty to go home that night, but that
‘ I would not withdraw the warrant I
‘ pretended to have taken out against her,
‘ till all was over.

‘ She was, indeed, too much rejoiced
‘ at the expectation of getting off from
‘ the imaginary prosecution to think of
‘ breaking her word; — my wicked hus-
‘ and, however, had the success of his
‘ design more greatly at heart, than to
‘ leave her any long time for reflection;
‘ accordingly we went pretty early the
‘ morning to her lodgings, accom-
‘ panied by one of those, who had as-
‘ sumed

‘ fumed the character of constable, and
 ‘ who, in reality, had formerly served
 ‘ the parish where he still lives in that
 ‘ capacity, and a lawyer, previously di-
 ‘ rected to fill up the bond in the strong-
 ‘ est and most binding terms that words
 ‘ could form. — There was not the least
 ‘ demur or objection, on the part of her
 ‘ ladyship; — she signed her name, and
 ‘ Mrs. Prinks, her woman, and the man
 ‘ we brought with us, set their hands as
 ‘ witnesses.

‘ You see, sir,’ pursued she, ‘ the drift
 ‘ of this contrivance, lady Mellafin was
 ‘ the instrument, but it was you that was
 ‘ ordained to suffer: — there was no fixed
 ‘ sum, or sums, stipulated for the support
 ‘ we were to receive from her; but Mar-
 ‘ plus was so continually draining her
 ‘ purse, that I have often been amazed
 ‘ by what arts she imposed on you to re-
 ‘ plenish it. — Whenever she began to
 ‘ make any excuse for not complying
 ‘ with his demands, he presently threat-
 ‘ ened her with putting the bond in
 ‘ force against you, by which means he
 ‘ extorted from her almost whatever he
 ‘ required.’

‘ One time in particular, he pretended
 ‘ to be under an arrest for three hundred
 ‘ pounds,

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‘ pounds, and she not having so much
‘ money by her, was obliged to send Mrs.
‘ Prinks, with her diamond necklace, to
‘ the pawn-broker’s to make it up; —
‘ yet, — would you believe it, sir? —
‘ notwithstanding all he got from her
‘ ladyship, he kept me poor and mean,
‘ as you see; — would not let me have a
‘ servant, but made me wash his linnen,
‘ and do all the drudgery, while he strut-
‘ ed about the town, like a fine fellow,
‘ with his tupee wig, and laced waistcoat,
‘ and if I made the least complaint, would
‘ tell me, in derision, that as I had no
‘ children I had nothing else to do but
‘ to wait upon him. — I bore all this,
‘ however, because I loved the villain,
‘ and, indeed, did not then know he was
‘ so great a one to me, as I now find he
‘ is.

‘ He pretended to me, that he was
‘ heartily weary of lady Mellasin, — hated
‘ her, — and could no longer bear the
‘ pain of dissembling with her. — ‘ I
‘ will, therefore,’ said he, ‘ demand a
‘ much larger sum of her, than I know
‘ it is in her power to raise: — her non-
‘ compliance will give me an excuse for
‘ compelling her husband to pay the pe-
‘ nalty of the bond, and when I have
‘ got the money I will purchase an em-
‘ ployment

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“ ployment in some one or other of the
“ public offices, on which you and I
“ may live comfortably together the re-
“ mainder of our days.’

‘ Accordingly, at his next Meeting
‘ with lady Mellasin, he told her, he had
‘ a present occasion for a sum of money,
‘ and she must let him have five hundred
‘ pounds, within four or five days at
‘ farthest. — This, it seems, extremely
‘ alarmed her; she replied, that it was
‘ impossible for her to procure so much
‘ at once, — complained that he had been
‘ too pressing upon her, and told him,
‘ that he ought not to expect she could
‘ always supply his extravagancies in the
‘ manner she had lately done. — High
‘ words arose between them on this ac-
‘ count; — she reproached him with the
‘ straits he had already put her to, —
‘ said he must wait till money came into
‘ her hands. — He swore the present exi-
‘ gence of his affairs required an imme-
‘ diate supply, — that he saw no remedy
‘ but arresting you, and they parted in
‘ great anger.

‘ The next day he sent me to her with
‘ a letter; — neither she, nor mrs. Prinks,
‘ was at home, and I did not judge pro-
‘ per to leave it with the servants, so
‘ carried.

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arried it back again: — he did not appen to ask me for it, and I never ought of returning it, which I am now very glad of, as it may serve to corroborate the truth of what I told ou.’

In speaking this, she presented a paper Mr. Goodman, which he took hastily of her hands, and found it contained the words:

To lady MELLASIN.

Madam,

YOUR excuses wont do with me.—

Money I must have; — I know you may raise it if you will, and I am amazed you should imagine I can believe any thing you say to the contrary, when you have an old fellow, who, you yourself told me, knows no end to his wealth, and that you married him only to make him my banker. — Do not, therefore, offer to trifle with me any longer, for if you do, by my soul I shall put the bond in force, and then there will be an end of all love and all friendship between you and him, who has been for so many years,

Your constant servant,

O. MARPLUS.

“ Oh!

“ Oh! wretched, — wretched woman!” cried Mr. Goodman, as soon as he had done reading, — “ to how low, — how contemptible a state has vice reduced her!” — Mrs. Marplus, perceiving by his countenance the distraction of his mind, would not prosecute her discourse, till he, recovering himself a little, bid her go on, if any thing yet remained to be related of this shocking narrative.

‘ I have told you, sir,’ resumed she, ‘ the preparations, the consequence you are but too well acquainted with. — I have only to assure you, that I had not discovered my husband’s baseness, but with a view of your doing yourself justice; — you have no occasion to pay this bond, — you can prove it a fraud by the joint evidence of myself his wife, and another person, no less deeply concerned in the contrivance, and is ready to make his affidavit of every particular I have recited; — but then whatsoever is done, must be done with expedition, or he will be past the reach, either of you or me. — I have just now learned, that instead of purchasing an employment, as he pretended to me, he is privately preparing to go over to Holland, Brussels, or some of those places, and

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‘ and settle there with a young huffey,
‘ who, they say, is with child by him,
‘ and will leave me here to starve. His
‘ lawyer, to whom he has assigned the
‘ bond, is to advance fifteen hundred
‘ pounds upon it, on condition he has
‘ the residue of it to himself, when you
‘ shall discharge the whole. Now it is
‘ in your power, sir, to save yourself the
‘ payment of so much money, and re-
‘ lieve a much injured and distressed wife,
‘ by complaining to the court of Chan-
‘ cery of the imposition practiced on you,
‘ and procure a *Ne exeat regnum* to
‘ prevent his escape.’

Here she gave over speaking, and Mr. Goodman, after a short pause, replied, that he could not at that instant resolve on any thing; but added, that he would take some advice, and then let her know how far she might be serviceable to him: — on which she took her leave, after giving him directions where she might be found.



CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

*Shews some part of the consequences,
produced by the foregoing occurrence.*

THOUGH mr. Goodman very easily perceived the wife of Marplus had not made the discovery she had done through any principle of conscience, or true contrition for having been an accomplice in the base action she had revealed, but meerly in revenge to a husband, who had used her ill, and was about to leave her, yet he thought it behoved him to draw all the advantages he could, from the knowledge of so astonishing, and so alarming a secret.

He therefore wasted no time, either in unavailing reflections on his own inconsiderateness in marrying at his years, a woman, such as lady Mellasin, nor in exclamations on her ingratitude and perfidiousness, but convinced beyond a doubt of the wrongs he had sustained, bent his whole mind on doing himself justice, in as ample a manner as possible, on the aggressors.

The lawyer, to whom he had applied the day before, was not only a person who had transacted all the business he had in his way, but was also his acquaintance of a long standing, and very good friend, and it was no inconsiderable consolation, under so grievous a misfortune, that he was not at a loss whom he should consult on an affair that required the greatest integrity, as well as ability.

That gentleman, luckily for Mr. Goodman's impatience, came to enquire how he did, after his last night's shock, just as he was preparing to wait on him, in order to acquaint him with the more stabbing one he had since received:— this injured husband rejoiced, as much as the present unhappy situation of his mind would permit, at the sight of his friend, and related to him, in as brief a manner as he could, the sum of the whole story he had received from Mrs. Marplus.

“ Good God!” said the lawyer, as soon as Mr. Goodman had given over speaking, I am confounded;— but pray, sir, how have you resolved to do?— In what way will you proceed?” —
“ That I must ask of you,” replied Goodman, hastily; “ you may be
ol. II. I “ certain

“ certain I will not be passive in this
“ matter. — I only want to know what
“ course I am to steer.” — “ Could you
“ consent,” cried the lawyer, after a
“ pause, “ to be divorced from lady
“ Mellasin ?” — “ Consent !” said mr.
Goodman, with more warmth than be-
fore, “ the most terrible vexation I en-
“ dure, dwells in the consideration, that
“ she is still my wife ; — were once that
“ name erased, I think I should be easy.”
— “ I hope then soon to see you so,”
said the other ; “ but the first thing we
“ have to do is to get the affidavits of
“ the two witnesses, and then arrest Mar-
“ plus. — I shall order it so with his law-
“ yer, whom I have under my thumb, on
“ account of some mal-practices I have
“ detected him in, that he shall not dare
“ to procure bail for this unworthy cli-
“ ent. — In fine, sir,” continued he,
“ I do not doubt, the case being so plain,
“ but to relieve you from paying the
“ penalty of the bond ; but, in the mean
“ time, what will you do with lady Mel-
“ lasin ? — It is necessary she should be
“ removed out of the house.” — “ The
“ house is hell to me while she is in it,”
said mr. Goodman. — They had some
further talk on this affair, and the man-
ner in which mr. Goodman was to con-
duct

duct himself being settled, a footman was sent to bid Mrs. Prinks come down.

That confidanté of all her lady's guilty secrets could not, now detected, behold the face of Mr. Goodman, without the extremest terror and confusion: — he perceived it, as she stood trembling scarce half within the door, not daring to approach, — “Come near,” said he, “you are a servant, and below the effects of my resentment, which otherwise you might have cause to dread. — I have a message to send by you to your lady, — take care you deliver it in the words I give it.” — On which she ventured to advance a few steps farther into the room, and he went on, with a more authoritative voice than she had ever heard him assume before, in this manner:

“Tell her,” said he, “that for many reasons I find it wholly improper she should remain any longer under the same roof with me, — desire her therefore to provide a lodging immediately, for herself, and all belonging to her; — you must all depart this very night, so it behoves her to be speedy in her preparations.” — “To-night, sir!” said Mrs. Prinks? — “I have said it,” rejoined he, fiercely, — “begone! it is
I 2 “not

“not your business to reply, but to obey.” — She spoke no more, but retired with much greater haste than she had entered.

Mr. Goodman, and his lawyer, were pursuing their discourse, on the present melancholly occasion, when the butler came in to lay the cloth for dinner: as soon as he had finished, and set all the necessary utensils on the table, Mr. Goodman ordered him to go to Miss Betsy's chamber, and desire her to come down to dinner,

That young lady had passed the morning in a very disagreeable manner: — the want of repose the night before had made her lie in bed till the day was very far advanced: — when she got up, good-manners, good-breeding, and even common civility, obliged her to enquire after lady Mellasin's health; and being told, that she was still in bed, the same motives induced her to pay her compliments in person. — On entering the chamber, a mournful scene presented itself to her eyes: — lady Mellasin sat up, supported by her pillows, with all the tokens of despair and grief, in every feature of her face; — Miss Flora had thrown herself on a carpet by the bed-side, I

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leaning on the ruelle, and her eyes half drowned in tears ; — mrs. Prinks stood at a little distance from them, pale and motionless as a statue. — The approach of miss Betsy made some alteration in their postures, and seemed to awake them from that lethargy of silent woe ; — lady Mellasin began to exclaim on the hardness of her fate, and the cruelty of mr. Goodman, who, she said, seemed glad of a pretence to throw off that affection, which she had flattered herself would have been as lasting as life, and bewailed herself in terms so tender and pathetic, that in spite of the little respect, that miss Betsy in reality had for her, and the just indignation she had for some time conceived against miss Flora, her gentle, generous heart was touched with the strongest emotions of pity and forgiveness.

As she was far from suspecting all the grounds lady Mellasin had for this immoderate sorrow, and in her soul believing that mr. Goodman would soon be brought to forgive both the affront and the damage his fortune had suffered on her account, she begged her ladyship would not indulge the dictates of despair, but reflect on the natural sweetness of mr. Goodman's disposition, — the great love

he had for her, and above all his strict adherence to those principles of religion, which forbid a lasting resentment; — and, in fine, reminded her of every thing she could think on for her consolation.

None of them having yet breakfasted, she stayed and drank coffee with them, nor would her compassionate temper have permitted her to quit them so soon as she did, if she had not been called away to a milliner, who was come with some things she had the day before ordered to be brought, and she had but just dispatched this little affair, and got out of her deshabille, when she had received the above-mentioned message from Mr. Goodman.

On her coming into the parlour, where dinner was that moment serving up, “ I must request the favour of you, miss Betsy,” said Mr. Goodman, “ to do the honours of my table to-day.” — “ I shall do the best I can, sir,” replied miss Betsy, modestly, “ but am very sorry for the occasion, which obliges me to take upon me an office I am so little accustomed to.” — “ You will be the better able to discharge it when it becomes your duty,” said Mr. Goodman, with a half smile, “ but I believe

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“ this is the only time I shall put you
“ to it. — I have a kinswoman, who I
“ expect will be so good as to take care
“ of the affairs of my family hencefor-
“ ward.” — “ O, sir,” cried miss Betsy,
with a great deal of concern, “ I hope
“ lady Mellasin has not for ever forfeited
“ her place.”

Mr. Goodman was about to make some
reply, when they heard the voice of that
lady, whom miss Betsy had just mention-
ed, extremely loud upon the stairs, —
“ I will not be used in this manner;”
cried she, “ if I must go, let him tell
“ me so himself.” — On this mr. Good-
“ man grew extremely red : — “ Go,”
said he, to the footman that waited at
table, “ and tell lady Mellasin I will not
“ be disturbed.” — “ Hold,” cried the
lawyer, “ permit me, sir, to moderate
“ this matter.” — In speaking these words,
he rose hastily, and without staying to
hear what mr. Goodman would say, ran
to prevent lady Mellasin from coming
in. — While he was gone; “ Yes, miss
“ Betsy,” said mr. Goodman, “ you will
“ lose your companion; — miss Flora,
“ with her mother, leaves my house to-
“ night.”

Miss Betsy, who had gone out of lady Mellasin's chamber, before mrs. Prinks brought her this piece of intelligence from mr. Goodman, was prodigiously surpris'd to hear him speak in this manner. — "It
 " is a sudden turn, indeed," pursued he;
 " but the reasons which urge me to this
 " separation, will hereafter appear such
 " as I neither could nor ought to have
 " resisted." — Miss Betsy only replying,
 " that he was certainly the best judge
 " of what he did, no farther discourse
 " happened on this subject, nor indeed
 " on any other for some moments."

At last, however, mr. Goodman taking notice, that she looked more than ordinarily serious, "Perhaps," said he, "you
 " may think my house too melancholly
 " for you, when they are gone. — The
 " relation I intend to bring home, though
 " a perfect good woman, is pretty far
 " advanced in years, and I believe re-
 " ceives but few visits, especially from
 " the younger sort; — but as the house I
 " have hired for mr. Thoughtless will be
 " ready in a day or two, I should ima-
 " gine he would be glad to have you
 " with him, 'till you marry; — but this,"
 continued he, " is at your own option."
 " — I but mention it, because I would
 " have

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“ have you entirely easy in this point,
“ and consider what it is will most con-
“ tribute to make you so.”

Miss Betsy had only time to thank him for his goodness, before the lawyer came down: — that gentleman had found a more difficult task than he had expected, in bringing lady Mellasin to submit to the injunctions she had received from her husband, — not that she had the least spark of conjugal affection for him, as the reader may very well suppose, or would have wished ever to see him more, if she could have lived without him in the same fashion she did with him; but the thoughts of leaving her large and richly furnished house, — her fine side-board of plate, — her coach, — her equipage, and all those other ensigns of opulence and state she now enjoyed, were insupportable to her, and having in vain essayed what a feigned penitence and tenderness could do, to work him to forgiveness, had now resolved to try the effect of a more haughty and imperious deportment, — “ I will make him know I am his wife,” cried she, “ and whatever is possessed of, I am an equal sharer — let him not therefore think, that ever he is master, I shall cease to trespass.”

The lawyer then remonstrated to her, that though it were true as she said, that she had a right to partake of his fortune, yet it was still in the power of a husband to oblige her to receive the benefit of that right, in what manner, and in what place, he should think proper : — he told her, mr. Goodman was determined that she should quit his house, and that all applications, made by her to the contrary, would be fruitless, and exasperate him the more, and only serve to widen the unhappy breach between them. — “ If mr. Goodman,” said he, “ has no other complaint against your ladyship, than simply his paying the penalty of the bond, and it may be some other trifling debts, I cannot think he will, for any length of time, persevere in his present inflexibility of temper.” — These arguments, and some others he made use of, enforced with all the rhetoric and art he was master of, at last convinced her, that it was best for her to yield with a seeming willingness to the fate it was not in her power to avoid, and she promised him to send Prinks directly to hire an apartment for her, at a house near Golden Square, with the mistress, which she had some small acquaintance

The whole time this gentleman had been with lady Mellasin, the meat was kept upon the table, but he would not stay to eat, — “ We have not a minute “ to lose,” said he to mr. Goodman ; — “ let us go, sir, and dispatch what we “ have to do.” — With these words they both went hastily out of the doors, leaving miss Betsy in a good deal of consternation at what they were about.

CHAP. XVI.

a kind of olio; a mixture of many things, all of them very much to the purpose, though less entertaining than some others.

ADY Mellasin, who little expected that her husband was made so well painted, or even that he had the least thought of the worst part of her behaviour towards him, was ready enough to forgive herself, both from her experience of her common tenderness for her, and at his lawyer had insinuated, in vain to prevail on her to go away with her wife, that when this gust of pas-

sion was blown over, he would be reconciled, and consent to her return.

These imaginations made her carry it with a high hand before the servants, and as they were packing up her things, while Mrs. Prinks was gone to prepare a lodging for her; — “Your master will be glad to fetch me home again,” cried she; — “poor man! he has been strangely wrong-headed of late. — I suppose he will be ready to hang himself when he considers what he has done, for he may be sure I shall not very easily forgive the affront he has put upon me.”

How truly amiable is an unblemished character, and how contemptible is the reverse! — Servants naturally love and respect virtue in those they live with, and seldom or never either flatter or conceal the vices they do not greatly profit by. — The airs lady Mellasin gave herself, on this occasion, were so far from making them believe her innocent, or their master blameable, that as soon as they had got out of her sight, they only turned her pride, and the fall it was going to sustain, into ridicule and grimace.

Miss Betsey, however, could not see them depart in this manner, without feeling a very deep concern: — their misfortunes obliterated all the resentment she had at any time conceived against them, and she had never before been more angry, even with miss Flora, for the treachery she had been guilty of to her, than she was now grieved at the sight of her humiliation.

She was sitting alone, and full of very serious reflections on this sudden change in the family, when her brother Thoughtless came in: — she was glad of the opportunity of sounding his inclinations, as to her living with him, and now resolved to do it effectually: — she began with telling him, the whole story of lady Melan's and miss Flora's removal, and then complained how dully she should pass her time, with only mr. Goodman, an old gentlewoman, who was to be his house-keeper. — “ I thought you were about marrying,” said he, “ and expected from what mr. Goodman wrote to me, that my first compliment to you, on my arrival, would have been to have wished you . . . — You are not broke off with the old man, — are you ?”

The

The careless air with which he spoke these words, stung miss Betsy to the quick; she took no notice, however, how much she was piqued at them, but replied, that the whole affair was mere suggestion; — that it was true, indeed, she had for some time received the addresses of a gentleman, recommended by her brother Frank; — that he, and some other of her friends, were very much for the match, and she supposed had spoke of it as a thing concluded on, because they wished it to be so; but for her own part, she never had as yet entertained one serious thought about the matter, and at present was far from having any disposition to become a wife; — so that,” continued she, “if I am destined to stay in Mr. Goodman’s house, till I am relieved that way, it is very probable I may be moped to death, and married to my grave.”

“Where is the necessity for that?” said he: “Are there not places enough in town, where you may find good company to board, or lodge with?” — “Doubtless there are many such,” replied she, with some spirit, “and I am so unhappy as not to be friend so kind to make me a

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“tion, shall be obliged to seek an asylum
“among strangers.”

Mr. Thoughtless looked a little confounded at these words;— he had seen from the beginning of her discourse, the aim to which it tended, and as he had his own reasons for not complying with her desires, would not seem to understand her, but she now spoke too plain, and he was somewhat at a loss what answer to make, so as not to give her any cause of accusing his want of affection, and at the same time put her off from expecting he would agree to, what she would have him, in this point, when fortunately for his relief, a letter just brought by the post was presented to miss Betsy. —“From
“L——e,” said she, as soon as she took it into her hand. —“From brother Frank, then, I suppose,” cried he. —“No,” answered she, “from lady Trusty:— you will excuse me, brother, while I look over the contents.” — She broke open while she was speaking, and read herself as follows:.

To

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear miss Betsy,

SIR Ralph received yesterday a letter from Mr. Thoughtless, dated Calais the third Instant, so I doubt not, but by this time I may congratulate you on his safe arrival in London; but I am sorry to acquaint you, that while you were embracing one brother, you were in very great danger of losing another; but do not be too much alarmed, — I hope the worst is past: — I believe he gave you an account himself, that by an unlucky fall from his horse he was prevented from going to London so soon as he had designed, but the mischief done him by this accident, was much greater than he imagined at the time of his writing to you. — What he took only for a common bruise proved to be a contusion, and for want of proper care at first, through the outrageousness of the pain, soon brought on a fever: — for two whole days we were in the utmost apprehensions for his life but now, thanks to the author of mercies, we are assured by the physician that attends him, and who is esteem'd the most skilful this country, that he is in a fair way of doing

c. —

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‘ — His delirium has quite left him, and
‘ he has recovered the use of his reason,
‘ so far as to intreat I would send the
‘ warmest wishes of his heart to you,
‘ and to desire you will make the same
‘ acceptable to his dear brother, if you
‘ are yet so happy as to see him: — he
‘ also enjoins you to put his compliments
‘ to mr. Truworth, in such words as are
‘ befitting the friendship you know he
‘ has for him. — I have much to say to
‘ you from myself, on the score of that
‘ gentleman, and should be glad to add
‘ to the advice I have already given you,
‘ but am deprived of that satisfaction by
‘ the arrival of some company, who are
‘ come to pass a week or fortnight with
‘ us, therefore must defer what I have to
‘ say till another opportunity. — Farewell,
‘ may heaven still keep you under its
‘ protection, and your guardian angel ne-
‘ ver fail his charge. — Be assured, that
‘ though I do not write so long, nor so
‘ often to you as I could wish, I am always,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ My dear miss Betsy,

‘ Your very affectionate friend,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ M. TRUSTY.’

‘ P.S.

‘ P. S. I wrote the above this morning,
 ‘ because one of our men was to have
 ‘ gone pretty early to town, but fir
 ‘ Ralph having some letters of his own,
 ‘ which were not then ready, detained
 ‘ him, and I have now the pleasure to
 ‘ tell you, that the doctor, who is this
 ‘ moment come from your brother’s
 ‘ chamber, assures me, that he has
 ‘ found him wonderfully amended,
 ‘ since his visit to him last night. —
 ‘ Once more, my dear, adieu.’

Mr. Thoughtless perceiving some tears
 in the eyes of miss Betsy, while she was
 reading, cried out, “What is the matter,
 “ sister?” — I hope no ill news from the
 “ country.” — “Be pleased to read that,
 “ sir,” said she, giving him the letter,
 “ and see if I had not cause to be affected
 “ with some part of it.”

“Poor Frank,” said he, as soon as he
 had done reading, “I am very sorry for the
 “ accident has happened to him, but more
 “ glad that it is like to be attended with no
 “ worse consequences. — Do not be me-
 “ lancholly, my dear sister, you find he
 “ is in a fair way of recovery, and
 “ hope we shall soon have him with us.
 “ I long very much to see him,” con-
 tinued

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tinued he, “ and the more so, as I have
“ spoke in his behalf to a general officer,
“ whom I contracted an intimacy with
“ at Paris, and who has promised him all
“ the service he can, in procuring him a
“ commissiion.”

They had some further talk on family affairs, after which he told her, he was troubled to leave her alone, but was obliged to return to some company he had made an elopement from when he came there. At parting, he saluted her with a great deal of affection, — desired she would be chearful, and said, he dare believe she had too much merit ever to have any real cause to be otherwise.

This tendernefs very much exhilarated her drooping spirits, — she entertained fresh hopes of being in the house with a brother, who she found designed to live in the most elegant and polite manner, which was what she had, at present, the most at heart of any thing in the world: — she now began to fancy he did not propose it to her, either because he did not think she would approve of it, or because he feared, that to testify any desire of removing her might offend mr. Goodman, as she had boarded with him

EVER

ever since she came to town; — she therefore resolved to desire the favour of that gentleman to mention it to him, as of his own accord, and let her know what answer he should make. — This idea gave her some pleasure for a while, but it was as soon dissipated; — the thoughts of her brother Frank's misfortune, and the danger she could not be sure he was yet perfectly recovered from, came again into her mind; but this also vanished, on remembering the hopes lady Trusty had given her, yet still she was discontented, though she knew not well at what. — In fine, she was so little accustomed to reflect much on any thing, much less to be alone, that it became extremely irksome to her. — “What a wilderness is this house!” cried she to herself. — “What a frightful solitude! — One would think all the world knew lady Mellasin and miss Flora were gone, that nobody comes near the door. — How still? — How quiet is every thing?” — Then would she start from her chair, measure how many paces were in the room, — look at one picture, — then on another, — then on her own resemblance in the great glass; — but all this would not do: — she wanted somebody to talk to, something new to amuse herself with. — “I wonder,” said she, “what is be-

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“ of Truworth, — I have not seen him
“ these three days, — indeed I used him
“ a little ill at our last conversation ; —
“ but what of that ? If he loves me, as
“ well as he professes, he will not sure
“ pretend to be affronted at any thing I
“ do. — My brother desires me to give
“ his compliments, but if the man will
“ not come to receive them, ’tis none of
“ my fault ; — yet after all,” continued
she, having paused a little, “ what pri-
“ vilege has our sex to insult and tyra-
“ nize over the men ? — It is certainly
“ both ungenerous and ungrateful to use
“ them the worse, for using us, perhaps,
“ better than we deserve. — Mr. True-
“ worth is a man of sense, and, if I were
“ in his place, I would not take such
“ treatment from any woman in the
“ world. — I could not much blame him
“ if he never saw me more. — Well, —
“ when next he comes, I will, however,
“ behave to him with more respect.”

Thus did the dictates of a truly reason-
le woman, and the idle humour of a
in coquette, prevail by turns over her
fluating mind : — her adventure at

Forward’s came fresh into her head ;
she was in some moments angry with
Truworth for offering his advice ;
others, more angry with herself, for
not

not having taken it. — She remained in this perplexity till a servant, finding it grew late, and that his master did not sup at home, came in, and asked her if she would not please to have the cloth laid, to which she answered, with all her heart; on which, the table being immediately spread, she eat of something that was there, and soon after went to bed, where, 'tis probable, she lost in sleep, both all the pleasure and the pain of her past meditations.

Mr. Goodman was all this while, as well for several succeeding days also, busily employed on an affair no less disagreeable than it was new to him; but by the diligence and adroitness of his lawyer, he got the affidavits, the warrant, and every thing necessary for the intended prosecution of Marplus and lady Mellasin, ready much sooner than many others would have done, or he himself had expected.

The fatigue and perplexity he was under was indeed very great, as may be easily supposed, yet did it not render him neglectful of miss Betsy: — she had desired him to speak to her brother on her account, and he did so the first opportunity, — not as if the thing had been men-

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tioned by her, but as if he, in the present situation of his family, thought her removal convenient.

Mr. Thoughtless, from what his sister had said, expected he should one time or other be spoke more plainly to upon that subject, had prepared himself with an answer; — he told mr. Goodman, that nothing could have been more satisfactory to him, than to have his sister with him, if her being so were any ways proper; — “but,” said he, “as I am
“a single man, I shall have a crowd of
“gay young fellows continually coming
“to my house, and I cannot answer that
“all of them would be able to behave
“with that strict decorum, which I should
“wish to see always observed towards a
“person so near to me: — her presence,
“perhaps, might be some check upon
“them, and theirs no less disagreeable
“to her. — In fine, mr. Goodman,” continued he, “it is a thing wholly inconsistent with that freedom I propose
“to live in, and I would not have her
“think on it.”

It was not that this gentleman wanted natural affection for his sister, that he refused what he was sensible she so much desired, but he was at present so circumstanced,

stanced, that to have complied would, under a shew of kindness, have done her a real injury. — He had brought with him a young and very beautiful mistress from Paris, of whom he was fond, and jealous to that extravagant degree, that he could scarce suffer her a moment from his sight: — he had promised her the sole command of his house and servants, and that she should appear as his wife in all respects except the name. — How could he, therefore bring home a sister, who had a right to, and doubtless would have claimed all those privileges another was already in possession of? — And how would it have agreed with the character of a virtuous young lady, to have lived in the same house with a woman kept by her brother as his mistress?

But this was a secret miss Betsy was as yet wholly unacquainted with; and when Mr. Goodman repeated to her what had passed between them, on her score, and the excuse her brother had made for not complying with the proposal, she thought it so weak, and withal so unkind, that she could not forbear bursting into tears: — the good-natured old gentleman could not see her thus afflicted without be extremely concerned, and saying kind things to pacify her: — “ I

“ weep,” said he, “ I will make it my
“ business, nay my study, to procure
“ some place where you may be boarded
“ to your satisfaction.” — “ I beg, sir,”
“ that you will not mistake my meaning,
“ — I do assure you, sir, I am not want-
“ ing in sensibility of your goodness to
“ all our family, and to me in particular.
“ — I must indeed be strangely stupid
“ not to think myself happy under the
“ protection of a gentleman of so humane
“ and benign a disposition. — No, sir,
“ be persuaded there is no house in Lon-
“ don, except that of an own brother, I
“ would prefer to yours ; — I will, there-
“ fore, with your permission, continue
“ here, nor entertain the least thought of
“ removing, unless some accident yet un-
“ foreseen oblige me to it.”

Mr. Goodman then told her, that he should be glad she would always do what was most for her own ease. This was all the discourse they had upon this head, and when miss Betsy began to consider seriously on the behaviour both of lady Mellasin and miss Flora, she found there was little reason for her to regret the loss of their society ; — nor that she ought to think Mr. Goodman's house less agreeable for being out of it ; — she received her as she approved of, who had

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come to visit them, and by doing so were acquainted with her, and as to those, who visited herself in particular, it was the same as ever. — Mr. Goodman's kinswoman, now his housekeeper, was a well-bred, accomplished woman, and a cheerful agreeable companion; — she seemed studious to oblige her; — all the servants were ready to do every thing she desired, and it would have been difficult for her to have found any place where she could have been better accommodated, or have had more cause to be contented; and she would doubtless have thought herself more happy than she had ever been since her coming to Mr. Goodman's, if other things of a different nature had not given her some unquiet moments.

But besides the unkindness of one brother, on whom she had built the most pleasing hopes, and the indisposition of another, for whom she had a very great affection, the late behaviour of Mr. Trueworth gave her much matter of mortification: — she had not seen him for upwards of a week, — she imputed this absence to the rebuff she had given him at his last visit; and though she could not avoid confessing in her heart, that she had treated him neither as a gentleman, nor friend, yet her vanity having suggest-

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hat he was incapable of resenting any thing she did, received a prodigious shock by the disappointment it now sustained.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains only such Things as the reader might reasonably expect to have been informed of before.

IT was the fate of miss Betsy to attract a great number of admirers, but never to keep alive, for any length of time, the flame she had inspired them with. — Whether this was owing to the inconstancy of the addressers, or the ill conduct of the person addressed, cannot absolutely be determined; but it is highly probable, that both these motives might sometimes concur to the losing her so many conquests. — Mr. Truworth had been the most assiduous, and also the most persevering of all, that had ever yet wore her chains; — his love had compelled his judgment to pay an implicit obedience to her will; — he had submitted to humour all the little vanities of her temper, and affected to be easy at what his reason could not approve; — he had flattered himself,

himself, that all that was blameworthy in her would wear off by degrees, and that every error would be her last; 'till a long succession of repeated inadvertencies made him first begin to fear, and then to be convinced, that however innocent she might be in fact, her manner of behaviour would ill suit with the character he wished should always be maintained by the woman he made choice of for a wife.

His meeting her at miss Forward's, — her obstinate persisting in going to the play with that abandoned creature, after the remonstrances he had made her on that score, — her returning home so late, and in disorder, conducted by a stranger, — in fine, what he saw himself, and had been told, concerning the proceedings of that night, gave the finishing stroke to all his hopes, that she would ever, at least while youth and beauty lasted, be brought to a just sensibility of the fashion in which she ought to act.

If the letter, contrived and sent by the mischievous miss Flora, had reached his hands but two days sooner, it would have had no other effect upon him, than to make him spurn the invective scroll beneath his feet, and wish to serve the author in the same manner; but poor miss Best,

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by her own mismanagement, prepared his heart to receive any impressions to her prejudice, yet was the scandal it contained of so gross a kind, that he could not presently give into the belief of it, — “ Good “ God !” cried he, “ it is impossible ;—if “ she has so little sense of honour, or re- “ putation, as the lightness of her car- “ riage makes some people too ready to “ imagine, her very pride is sufficient to “ secure her virtue : — she would not, — “ could not condescend to the embraces “ of a man, who thought so meanly of “ her, as to attempt the gaining her on “ any other score than that of marriage ! “ — and yet,” pursued he, after a pause, “ who knows, but that very pride, which “ seems to be her defence, may have “ contributed to her fall ? — She has va- “ nity enough to imagine she may act “ with impunity what she would con- “ demn in others. — She might fancy, “ as the Poet says,

“ That faultless form could act no
“ crime,

“ But heav’n, on looking on it, must
“ forgive.”

“ Why then,” continued he, “ should
the foolish remains of that tenderness I
once had for her make me still hesitate

“ to believe her guilty? — No, — no,
 “ the account before me has too much
 “ the face of truth; — it is too circum-
 “ stantial to be the work of meer inven-
 “ tion. — No one would forge a lie, and
 “ at the same time present the means of
 “ detecting it to be so. — Here is the vil-
 “ lage specified, — the nurse’s name, —
 “ a particular direction how I may con-
 “ vince myself of the shameful truth. —
 “ There is no room to doubt.”

To strengthen the opinion he had now
 of her guilt, the words miss Flora had
 said to him, returned to his remembrance,
 — “ That there was a time when miss
 “ Betsy had trusted her with her dearest
 “ secrets.” — “ Her dearest secrets!”
 cried he: — “ What secrets can a virtuous
 “ young lady have, that shun the light,
 “ and require so much fidelity in the con-
 “ cealment of? — No, — no, — it must
 “ be this miss Flora meant by that em-
 “ phatic expression. — The other could
 “ not hide the consequence of her shame-
 “ ful passion from the family; — lady
 “ Mellasin and miss Flora must know it,
 “ and perhaps many more, who, while
 “ they were witnesses of the respect I paid
 “ her, laughed at the folly of my blind
 “ credulity.”

Thus at some times did he believe her no less guilty than the letter said, but at others, sentiments of a different nature prevailed, and pleaded in her favour; — her adventure with the gentleman commoner at Oxford came into his head: — “If the two great gaiety of her temper,” said he, “led her into a danger, she then had courage and virtue to extricate herself out of it.” — He also recollected several expressions she had casually let fall, testifying her disdain and abhorrence of every thing that had the least appearance of incontinency; — but then relapsing into his former doubts, — “Yet who,” cried he, again, “can account for accident? — she might in one unguarded moment grant what in another she would blush to think of.”

How terrible is the situation of a lover, who endeavours all he can to reconcile his reason to his passion, yet to which side soever he bends his thoughts, finds them things so diametrically opposite and incompatible, that either the one or the other must be totally renounced. — Willing therefore to take the party, which would best become his honour and reputation, Mr. Truworth resolved to banish from his mind all the ideas of those ami-

able qualities he had admired in miss Betsy, and remember only those which gave him occasion for disgust.

But this was a task not so easy to be accomplished as he imagined; for though the irregularity of miss Betsy's conduct was of itself sufficient to deter him from a marriage with her, yet he found he stood in need of all helps to enable him to drive that once so pleasing object entirely from his mind.

To be therefore more fully confirmed how utterly unworthy she was of his regard, than could be made by this anonymous accusation, he went in person down to Denham, where following the directions given him in the letter, the cottage where Goody Bushman lived was presently pointed out to him, by the first person he enquired of. — “So far, at least,” said he to himself, “the letter-writer has told truth.” — He then sent his servant with the horses to wait his return at a public house in the village, and walked towards the place he came in search of.

He found the honest countrywoman holding a child in her arms on one side of the fire, — two rosy boys were sitting opposite

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opposite to her, with each a great piece of bread and butter in his hand. — At sight of a strange gentleman she got off her seat, and dropping a low curtesy, cried, “Do you please to want my husband, sir?” — “No,” said Mr. Truworth, “my business is with you, if you are Mrs. Bushman.” — Goody Bushman, an’t please you, sir,” replied she. — And then bidding the boys get further from the chimney, reached him the handsomest joint-stool her cottage afforded for him to sit down.

He told her, that he had a kind woman, who had some thoughts of putting a child to nurse into the country, — that she had been recommended; — “but,” said he, “can we have nothing to drink together? — What sort of liquor does this part of the world afford,” — “Alack sir,” replied she, “you fine gentlemen, mayhap, may like nothing but wine, and there is none to be had any nearer than Uxbridge.” — “Nor cyder,” cried he. — “I am said none good” replied she, “but there is pure good ale down the lane, if your honour could drink that.” — “It is all one to me,” said Mr. Truworth, “if you like it yourself.” — Then turning to him who seemed the eldest of the two boys, “I suppose,

“suppose, my lad,” continued he, “you
 “can procure us a tankard of this same
 “ale.” — “Yes, sir,” cried his mother,
 hastily, “go to Philpot’s, and bid them
 “send a can of their best ale, and, do
 “you hear, desire my dame to draw it
 “herself.” — Mr. Truworth then gave
 the boy some money, and he went on
 his errand, prudently taking with him
 a large slice of bread that happened to lie
 upon the dresser.

“That is a fine child you have in your
 “lap,” said Mr. Truworth, “is it your
 “own?” — “No, sir,” answered she, —
 “this is a young Londoner.” — “Some
 “wealthy citizen’s, I suppose,” rejoined
 he. — “No, by my truly, sir,” said she,
 “it has neither father nor mother, and
 “belike must have gone to the parish,
 “if a good sweet young lady had not
 “taken pity of it, and given it me to
 “nurse; and, would you think it, sir,
 “is as kind to it, and pays as punctually
 “for it, as if it were her own. — My
 “husband goes up to London every
 “month to receive the money, and she
 “never lets him come home without it,
 “and give him over and above six-pence
 “or a shilling to drink upon the road;
 “— poor man, — he loves a sup of
 “ale dearly, — that’s all his fault.”

“thou

“ though I cannot say he ever neglects
“ his business; — he is up early and
“ down late, and does a power of work
“ for a little money. — Sir Roger Hill
“ will employ nobody but him, and good
“ reason, because he makes him take
“ whatever he pleases, and that is little
“ enough, God knows, for he is a hard
“ man, and if it were not for my nur-
“ sing, we could not make both ends
“ meet, as the saying is; — but he is
“ our landlord, and we dare not disoblige
“ him.”

This innocent countrywoman would probably have run on with the whole detail of her family affairs, if Mr. Truworth, desirous of turning the tide of her communicative disposition into a channel more satisfactory to his curiosity, had not interrupted her.

“ This is a very extraordinary charity
“ you have been telling me of,” said he,
“ especially in a young lady; — she must
“ certainly be somewhat of kin to the
“ child.” — “ None in the varsal world;
“ fir,” answered she, “ only her god-
“ mother.” — The boy now bringing in
the ale, Mr. Truworth was obliged to
take it, and testify some sort of appro-
bation, as the good woman had praised

it so much; but he made her drink a hearty draught of it, after which, “And pray,” resumed he, what is the name of the child?” — “O fir,” replied she, “the lady has given it her own name, Betsy; — she is called miss Betsy Thoughtless herself, — though she is a woman grown, and might have had a child or two of her own; — but you know, fir, they are all called miss till they are married.”

Mr. Truworth in the present disturbance of his thoughts making no reply, she went on: — “She is a sweet young lady, I can tell you, fir,” said she; “I never saw her but once, and that was when I went to fetch the child, — she used me with so much familiarity, — not a bit proud, — charged me to take care of her little Betsy, and told me, if she lived, I should keep her till she was big enough to go to school, — and told me, she would have her learn to write, and read, and work; — then she would put her ’prentice to mantua-maker, or a milliner, or so such pretty trade, — and then — knows, fir,” continued she, holding the child at arms length, and dancing but some great gentleman may fall in love with my littl

“and I may live to see her ride in her
“coach? — I warrant she will make
“much of her old nurse.”

“There are many strange things hap-
“pen in the world, indeed,” said Mr.
Truworth, with a sigh. After which,
thinking there was no further discovery
to be made, he rose up to go away; but
seeing the change of the money he had
sent by the boy for the beer, lie upon
the table, he gave it to him, saying,
“Here, my good boy, take this, and
“divide it with your brother, to buy
“apples.” — Then turning to the nurse
took his leave of her with this compli-
ment, “Well, Mrs. Bushman, I believe
“you are a very honest careful woman,
“and shall not fail to remember you
“whenever it comes in my way. — In
“the mean time,” added he, putting a
crown-piece into her hands, “take this,
“and make merry with your husband.”
— The poor woman was so transported,
that she knew not how to thank him suf-
ficiently, — she made twenty curtesies, —
crying, “Heaven bless you, sir; — you
“are a right noble gentleman I am sure.
“ — Marry such guests come not every
“day.” — And with such like expressions
of gratitude, followed him ’till he was
quite out of hearing.

What

What now could this enquiring lover think? — Where was the least room for any conjecture in favour of miss *Betsy's* innocence, to gain entrance into his breast? — He had seen the child, — had heard by whom, and in what manner it was delivered: — the charge given with it, and the promises made for its future protection, and whether the nurse was really so weak as to be imposed upon by this pretence of charity, or whether bribed to impose it upon others, the fact, as related in the letter, appeared to him so plain, from every circumstance, as to admit no possibility of a doubt.

A marriage with miss *Betsy* was, therefore, now quite out of the question with him; — the fashion of entirely breaking with her, was the only thing that puzzled him. — Loth he was to reproach her with the cause, and equally loth to be deemed so inconstant, as to quit her without a justifiable one. — He remained in this dilemma for the space of two days, at the expiration of which, after much debating within himself, he wrote, and sent to her, by a servant, the following epistle:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

MADAM,

THE very ill success I have met with, in the only business which brought me to this town, has determined me to quit it with all possible expedition, and not to think of a return, 'till I find myself in a disposition more capable of relishing its pleasures. You have given me, madam, too many instances how little agreeable my presence has ever been, not to convince me, that I stand in no need of an apology for not waiting on you in person, and that this distant way of taking my leave will be less unwelcome to you than a visit, which perhaps would only have interrupted your more gay amusements, and broke in, for some moments, on that round of pleasures, with which you are perpetually encompassed. — May you long enjoy all the felicities the fashion you chuse to live in can bestow, while I retire to solitude, and lost in contemplation, on some late astonishing occurrences, cry out with the poet :

“ There is no wonder, or else all is
“ wonder.”

‘ If

' If I speak in riddles, a very small re-
 ' trospect on some remarkable passages in
 ' your own conduct will serve for the so-
 ' lution; — but that might probably be
 ' imposing on yourself too great a task.
 ' — I shall therefore trouble you no far-
 ' ther than to assure you, that though I
 ' cease to see you, I shall never cease to
 ' be,

' With the most friendly wishes,

' MADAM,

' Your very humble

' C. TRUEWORTH.'

Mr. Truworth having dispatched this
 letter, which he doubted not but would
 finish all his concerns with miss Betfy,
 thought he had nothing more to do, than
 to take leave of the friends he had in
 town, and retire to his seat in the country,
 and there endeavour to lose the remem-
 brance of all that had been displeasing to
 him since he left it.

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CHAP. XVIII.

Is of very small importance, yet contains such things as the reader may expect to bear.

WHILE mr. Truworth was employing himself in exploring the truth of miss Betsy's imaginary crime, and hunting after secrets to render her more unworthy of his love, that young lady's head was no less taken up with him, though in a widely different manner; — she wanted not a just sense of the merits, both of his person and passion; and though a plurality of lovers, the power of flattering the timid with vain hopes, and awing the proudest into submission, seemed to her a greater triumph, than to be the wife of the most deserving man on earth, yet when she consulted her heart, she found, and avowed within herself, she could part with that triumph, with less reluctance in favour of mr. Truworth, than of any other she yet had seen.

His absence, therefore, and the strange neglect he testified in not sending to acquaint

quaint her with the cause, gave her as much inquietude, as a person of her humour could be capable of feeling ;—but whether it proceeded in reality from the first shootings of a growing inclination, or from that vanity, which made her dread the loss of so accomplished a lover, cannot be easily determined ;— but to which soever of these causes it was owing, I think we may be pretty certain, that had he visited her in the situation her mind then was, he would have had no reason to complain of his reception.

She never went abroad without flattering herself with the expectation of hearing, on her return home, that he had been there, or at least that some letter or message from him had been left for her, and every disappointment involved her in fresh perplexity. — In fine, if she had considered him with half that just regard, while he continued to think her worthy of his affections, as she was beginning to do when he was endeavouring to drive all favourable ideas of her from his mind, they might both have been as happy, as at present they were the contrary.

She had been with miss Mabel, and two other ladies of her acquaintance, to see that excellent comedy, called

Caro

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Careless Husband : — she was very much affected with some scenes in it ; — she imagined she saw herself in the character of lady Betty Modish, and mr. Truworth in that of lord Morelove, and came home full of the most serious reflections, on the folly of indulging an idle vanity, at the expence of a man of honour and sincerity. — She was no sooner within the doors, than the letter above-mentioned was put into her hands ; — as they told her, it had been left for her in the beginning of the evening, by one of mr. Truworth's servants, and she knew, both by the superscription, and device on the seal, that it came from that gentleman, she ran hastily up stairs to her chamber, in order to examine the contents ; — but what flutterings seized her heart ! — What an universal agitation diffused itself through all her frame, on reading even the first lines of this cruel epistle ! “ Good heaven ! ” cried she, “ going out of town, — not to return. ” — And then having proceeded a little further ; — “ What, ” added she, “ not see me before he goes, — sure the man is either mad, or I am in a dream. ”

Surprise, and some mixture of a tender remembrance, were the first emotions of her mind ; but when she came to that part of the

the letter, which seemed to reflect upon her conduct, and the way in which she chose to live, her native haughtiness reassumed its former power, and turned her all into disdain and rage. — “No retrospect,” said she, “on my own behaviour, can ever justify the audacious reproaches he treats me with. — If I have been to blame, it is not his province to upbraid me with it.”

As she was entirely ignorant of the base artifice had been put in practice against her, and was conscious of no fault Mr. Truworth had to accuse her of, but that of her going with Miss Forward to the play, after the warning he had given her of the danger, it must be confessed, she had a right to think the provocation too slight to draw from him such resentful expressions, much less to induce him to abandon her.

“Ungrateful man,” said she, bursting into tears of mingled grief and spite, “to use me thus, when I was just beginning to entertain the kindest thoughts of him! — When I was ready to acknowledge the error I was guilty of, in not following his advice, and had resolved never to throw myself into such inconveniencies again. — ’Tis plain he str-

“loved

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“ loved me, or he would not have taken
“ so poor, — so trifling a pretence to
“ break with me.”

Thus, for some moments, did she bewail, as it were, the ill treatment she thought she had received from him. — Then looking over the letter again, — “ With what a magisterial air,” cried she, “ with what an affectation of superiority does he conclude! — With the most friendly wishes my humble servant. — Good lack! — friendly! — let him carry his friendly wishes to those he may think may receive them as a favour.”

Upon revolving in her mind all the circumstances of her behaviour towards Mr. Truworth, she could find nothing, except what passed at his last visit, that could give him any occasion for disgust, and even that she looked upon as a very insufficient plea for that high resentment he now expressed, much more for his resolving to throw off a passion he had a thousand and a thousand times vowed should be as lasting as his life.

The anonymous letter sent her by Miss Flora, some time since, now came fresh into her mind; — that passage in it, which

which insinuated, that mr. Truworth had no real design of marrying her, — that he but trifled with her, and on the arrival of her brothers would find some pretence or other to break entirely with her, seemed now to tally exactly with his present manner of proceeding. — “The devil,” said she, “may some time speak truth, — mr. Truworth has but too well verified the words of that malicious girl, and what she herself then thought a falshood is now confirmed by fact; — yet, wherefore,” cried she again, “did he take all this pains, if he never loved me, — never hoped any recompence for his dissimulation, what end could he propose by practising it? — What advantage, what pleasure could it give him to affront the sister of his friend, and impose upon the credulity of a woman he had no design upon?” — It would be endless to repeat the many contradictory surmises, which rose alternately in her distracted mind, so I shall only say, she sought, but the more she did so, the more she became incapable of fathoming the bottom of this mysterious event.¹⁾

The butler was laying the cloth in the parlour for supper when she came home — Mr. Goodman had waited for her some time.

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time, thinking she might be undressing, and now sent to desire she would come down; — but she begged to be excused, — said she could not eat, and then called for Nanny, who was the maid that usually attended her in her chamber, to come up and put her to bed.

This prating wench, who would always know the whole secrets of every body in the family, whether they thought fit to entrust her with them or not, used frequently to divert miss Betsy with her idle stories; but it was not now in her power, — that young lady had no attention for any thing, but the object of her present meditations, which the other not happening to hit upon, was answered only with peevishness and ill humour.

But as every little circumstance, if any way adapted to the passion we at that time are possessed of, touches upon the jarring string, and seems a messenger from fate; an accident, the most trifling that can be imagined, served to renew in miss Betsy, the next morning, those anxieties, which sleep had, in some measure, abated.

A ballad-singer happening to be in the street, the first thing she heard, on her waking,

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waking, was these words, sung in a sonorous voice, just under her window:

- ‘ Young Philander woo’d me, long,
- ‘ I was peevish, and forbad him;
- ‘ I would not hear his charming song,
- ‘ But now I wish, I wish I had him.’

Though this was a song, at that time much in vogue, and miss Betsy had casually heard it an hundred times, yet in the humour she now was, it beat an alarm upon her heart. — It reminded her how inconsiderate she had been, and shewed the folly of not knowing how to place a just value on any thing, ’till it was lost, in such strong colours before her eyes, as one would scarce think it possible, an incident in itself so merely bagatelle could have produced.

Again she fell into very deep reflection, and divesting herself of all passion, pride, and the prejudice her vanity had but too much inspired her with, she found, that though mr. Truworth had carried his resentment further than became a man, who loved to that degree, as he pretended to have done; yet she could no way justify herself to her brother Frank, lady Trusty, or any of those friends, who had

espoused

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 217
espoused his cause, for having given him
the provocation.

To heighten the splenetic humour she was in, mr. Goodman, who having been taken up with his own affairs, had not mentioned mr. Truworth to her for some days, happened this morning, as they sat at breakfast, to ask her how the courtship of that gentleman went on, and whether there was like to be a wedding, or not? — Perceiving she blushed, — hung down her head, and made no answer, — “Nay, — nay,” — said he, “I told you long ago I would not interfere in these matters, and have less reason now than ever to do so, as your eldest brother is in town, and who is doubtless capable of advising you for the best.” — Miss Betsy was in a good deal of confusion; — she knew not as yet whether it would be proper for her to acquaint mr. Goodman with what had passed between mr. Truworth and herself, or to be silent on that head, ’till she should see what a little time might bring about. — As she was thinking in what manner she should reply, mr. Goodman’s lawyer, luckily for her relief, came in, and put an end to a discourse, which, in the present situation of her mind, she was very unfit to bear a part in.

But as if this was to be a day of continued admonitions to miss Betsy, she no sooner dress'd, and ready to quit chamber, than she heard miss Mabel's voice upon the stairs. — As that lady was not accustomed to make any morning visits, she was a little surpris'd ; — she ran however to meet saying, “ This is a favour I did not expect, and therefore have the more to thank you.” — “ I do not know,” replied the other, as she entered the room, “ whether you will think I deserve this or not, when you hear the business brought me ; for I assure you I come only to chide you.” — “ I think,” said miss Betsy, with a sigh, “ that the world takes the liberty of doing with me ; but pray, my dear,” continued she, “ how am I so unhappy to deserve it from you ?”

“ Why you must know,” replied Mabel, “ that I have taken upon myself to be the champion of distress'd love ; you have broken a fine gentleman's heart, and I am come to tell you that you must either make it whole again, as it was before he saw you, or repair the damage he has sustain'd by giving him your own.” — “ I p

“not guilty,” said miss Betsy, in a tone somewhat more sprightly than before, “but pray, who has gained so great an influence over you, as to send you on so doughty an errand?” — “No, my dear, you are quite mistaken in the matter,” replied the other, — “I assure you I am not sent, — I am only led by my own generosity, and the sight of poor mr. Truworth’s despair.” — “Truworth!” cried miss Betsy hastily, “What do you mean?” — “I mean,” replied the other, “to engage you, if the little rhetoric I am mistress of can prevail on you to consider, that while we use a man of sense and honour ill, we do ourselves a real injury: — The love our beauty has inspired, may, for a time, secure our power, but it will grow weaker by degrees, and every little coquette air we give ourselves, lessen the value of our charms. — I know there is at present some very great brulée between you and mr. Truworth; — he is a match every way deserving of you, — he has the approbation of all your friends, and I have heard you acknowledge, you are not insensible of his merit; to what then do you study to perplex and give unnecessary pain to a heart, which according to all appearances,

“ will one day take a pride in rendering
 “ happy ?”

“ This is an extreme fine harangue
 “ indeed,” replied miss Betsy, “ but I
 “ would fain know for what reason it is
 “ directed to me ; — if mr. Truworth
 “ imagines I have used him ill, I think
 “ it no proof of his understanding, to
 “ make a proclamation of it ; — but, for
 “ heaven’s sake, how came you to be
 “ the confidante of his complaints ?”

“ Indeed I have not that honour,” said
 miss Mabel ; “ finding myself a little ill
 “ this morning, I thought the air would
 “ do me good, so went into the park
 “ taking only a little girl with me, who
 “ lives at the next door, because I would
 “ not go quite alone ; being in the desire
 “ to see you, I crossed the grass, and
 “ was passing towards the back of the
 “ bird-cage walk, where who should I find
 “ among the trees but mr. Truworth
 “ if I may call the object that then pre-
 “ sented itself to me by that name ; for
 “ indeed, miss Betsy, the poor gentleman
 “ seems no more than the shadow of him-
 “ self. — He saw me at a distance, and
 “ I believe would have avoided me, but
 “ perceiving my eyes were upon him,
 “ cleared up his countenance, as well

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 221

‘ he was able, and accosted me with the
‘ usual salutations of the morning. — ‘ It
‘ is somewhat surprising, madam,’ said
‘ he, with an air of as much gallantry as
‘ he could assume, ‘ to find a lady so
‘ justly entitled to the admiration of the
‘ world, as miss Mabel is, shun the gay
‘ company of the Mall, and choose an
‘ unfrequented walk, like this.’ — ‘ I
‘ might retort the same exclamation of
‘ surprise,’ replied I, ‘ at so unexpected-
‘ ly meeting with mr. Truworth here.’

‘ After this, as you know, my dear,’
continued she, ‘ I have lately, on your
‘ account, had the pleasure pretty often of
‘ mr Truworth’s company, I took the
‘ liberty to ask him where he had buried
‘ himself, that I had not seen him for so
‘ many days : — to which he answered,
‘ not without a confusion, which I saw
‘ he attempted, though in vain, to con-
‘ ceal from me, — ‘ Yes, madam, I have
‘ indeed been buried from all pleasure,
‘ — have been swallowed up in affairs
‘ little less tormenting than those of the
‘ grave ; — but,’ added he, ‘ they are
‘ now over, and I am preparing to re-
‘ turn to my country-seat, where I hope
‘ to re-enjoy that tranquility, which, since
‘ my leaving it, has been pretty much
‘ disturbed.’

‘ Nothing could equal my astonishment, at hearing him speak in this manner: — To your country seat!’ cried I; ‘ not to continue there for any long time!’ — ‘ I know not as yet, madam,’ replied he, and then, after a pause, ‘ perhaps forever,’ added he. — ‘ Bless me,’ said I, ‘ this is strange indeed,— miss Betsy did not tell me a word of it, and I saw her but last night.’ — ‘ She might not then know it, madam,’ answered he; ‘ but if she had, I am not vain enough to imagine, she would think a trifle, such as my departure, worth the pains of mentioning.’

‘ I then,’ pursued miss Mabel, ‘ endeavoured to rally him out of this humour. — After having told him, I had a better opinion of your understanding and generosity, than to be capable of believing you thought so lightly of his friendship and affection, I added, that this was only some little pique between you, — some jealous whim; but he replied to all I said on this subject with a very grave air, pretended business, and took his leave somewhat abruptly, for a man of that politeness, I had till now always observed in him.’

‘ He

‘ He carries it with a high hand, indeed,’ cried miss Betsy; — ‘ but it is no matter, — I shall give myself no trouble whether he stays in town, — or whether he goes into the country, — or whether I ever see him more. — What! — does the man think to triumph over me?’

‘ I do not believe that is the case with mr. Truworth,’ said the discreet miss Mabel; ‘ but I know it is the way of many men to recriminate in this manner, — and pray when they do, who can we blame for it but ourselves in giving them the occasion? — For my part, I should think it an affront to myself to encourage the addresses of a person, I did not look upon worthy of being treated with respect.’

She urged many arguments to convince miss Betsy of the vanity and ill consequences of trifling with an honourable and sincere passion, which though no more than what that young lady had already made use of to herself, and was fully persuaded in the truth of, she was not very well pleased to hear from the mouth of another.

Though these two ladies perfectly agreed in their sentiments of virtue and reputation, yet their dispositions and behaviour in the affairs of love, were as widely different, as any two persons possibly could be; — and this it was, which during the course of their acquaintance, gave frequent interruptions to that harmony between them, which the mutual esteem they had for each other's good qualities, would otherwise have rendered perpetual.

C H A P. XIX.

Is multum in parvo.

THERE is an unaccountable pride in human nature, which often gets the better of our justice, and makes us espouse what we know within ourselves is wrong, rather than appear to be set right by any reason, except our own.

Miss Betsy had too much of this unhappy propensity in her composition. — A very little reflection enabled her to see clearly enough the mistakes she sometimes fell into; but she could not bear they should be seen by others. — Miss Mabel

was not only in effect the most valuable of all the young ladies she conversed with, but was also the most esteemed and loved by her, yet was she less happy and delighted in her company, than in that of several others, for whom her good sense would not suffer her to have the least real regard. — The truth is, that though she was very well convinced of her errors, in relation to those men who professed themselves her admirers, yet she loved those errors in herself, — thought they were pretty, and became her ; — and therefore as she could not as yet resolve to alter her mode of behaviour, was never quite easy in the presence of any one, who acted with a prudence she would not be at the pains to imitate.

There were two young ladies, who had an apartment in the palace of St. James's, their father having an office there, who exactly suited with her, in the most volatile of her moments : — they had wit, — spirit, and were gay almost to wildness, without the least mixture of libertinism, or indecency. — How perfectly innocent they were, is not the business of this history to discuss, but they preserved as good a reputation as their neighbours, and were well respected in all public places.

There it was miss Betsy chiefly found an asylum from those perplexing thoughts, which in spite of her pride, and the indifference she had for mankind, would sometimes intrude upon her mind on mr. Truworth's account; — here she was certain of meeting a great variety of company; — here was all the news and scandal the town could furnish; — here was musick, — dancing, — feasting, — flattery; — in fine, here was every thing, that was an enemy to care and contemplation.

Among the number of those, who filled the circle of these two court belles, there was a gentleman named Munden: — he appeared extremely charmed with miss Betsy at first sight, and after having informed himself of the particulars of her family and fortune, took an opportunity, as he was conducting her home one night, to intreat she would allow him to pay his respects to her where she lived. — This was a favour miss Betsy was never very scrupulous of granting, and consented now the more readily, as she thought the report of a new lover would gall mr. Truworth, who, she heard by some, who had very lately seen him, was not yet gone out of town.

Mr.

Mr. Munden, to testify the impatience of his love, waited on her the very next day, as soon as he thought dinner would be over, at Mr. Goodman's: — he had the satisfaction of finding her alone; but, fearing she might not long be so, suffered but a very few minutes to escape before he acquainted her with the errand on which he came: — the terms in which he declared himself her admirer, were as pathetic as could be made use of for the purpose; — but though this was no more than Miss Betsy had expected, and would have been strangely mortified if disappointed, by his entertaining her on any other score; yet she affected, at first, to treat it with surprise, and then, on his renewing his protestations, to answer all he said with a sort of railery, in order to put him to the more expence of oaths and asseverations.

It is certain, that whoever pretended to make his addresses to Miss Betsy, stood in need of being previously provided with a good stock of repartees, to silence the sarcasms of the witty fair, as well as fine speeches, to engage her to more seriousness.

Mr. Munden often found himself at his *ne plus ultra*, but was not in the least disconcerted at it; — he was a courtier;

— he was accustomed to attend at the levees of the great, and knew very well, that persons in power seldom failed to exercise it over those, who had any dependance on them; and looking on the case of a lover with his mistress, as the same with one who is soliciting for a pension, or employment, had armed himself with patience, to submit to every thing his tyrant should inflict, in the hope, that it would one day be his turn to impose laws, — according to the poet's words :

- The humblest lover, when he lowest
• lies,
- But kneels to conquer, and but falls
• to rise.

• Miss Betty was indeed a tyrant, but a very gentle one; she always mingled some sweet with the sharpness of her expressions: — if in one breath she menaced despair, in the next she encouraged hope, and her very repulses were sometimes so equivocal, as that they might be taken for invitations; — she played with her lovers, as she did with her monkey, but expected more obedience from them; — they must look gay or grave, according as she did so; — their humour, and their very motions must be regulated.

her influence, as the waters by the moon : — in fine, an exterior homage was the chief thing to be required ; for as to the heart, her own being yet untouched, she gave herself but little trouble how that of her lovers stood affected.

Mr. Munden, with less love, perhaps, than many, who had addressed her, knew better how to suit himself to her humour ; — he could act over all the delicacies of the most tender passion, without being truly sensible of any of them, and though he wished, in reality, nothing so much as attaining the affections of miss Betsy, yet wishing it without those timid inquietudes, — those jealous doubts, — those perplexing anxieties, which suspense inflicts on a more solid mind, he was the more capable of behaving towards her in the way she liked.

He was continually inviting her to some party of pleasure or other, — he gallanted her to all public shews, — he treated her with the most exquisite dainties of the season, and presented her with many curious toys. — Being to go with these ladies, at whose appointment he first commenced his acquaintance with her, and some other company to a masquerade, he waited on her some hours before the time, and

and taking out of his pocket a ruby, cut in the shape of a heart, and illustrated with small brilliants round about, — ‘I beg, madam,’ said he, ‘you will do me the honour of wearing this to-night, either on your sleeve, or breast, or some other conspicuous place. — There will be a great deal of company, and some perhaps in the same habit as yourself, — this will direct my search, prevent my being deceived by appearances, which otherwise I might be, and prophanely pay my worship to some other, instead of the real goddess of my soul.’

This was the method he took to ingratiate himself into the favour of his mistress, and it had the effect, if not to make her love him, at least to make her charmed with this new conquest, much more than she had been with several of her former ones, though never so much deserving her esteem.

In the midst of these gay scenes, however, mr. Truworth came frequently into her head. — To find he was in town, made her flatter herself, that he lingered here on her account, and that, in spite of all his resolution, he had not courage to leave the same air she breathed in; — she fancied, that if she could meet him, on any

any accident throw him in her way, she should be able to rekindle all his former flames, and render him as much her slave as ever. — With this view she never went abroad without casting her eyes about, in search of him ; — nay she sometimes even condescended to pass by the house where he was lodged, in hopes of seeing him either going in or out, or from some one or other of the windows ; but chance did not befriend her inclinations this way, nor put it in her power again to triumph over a heart, the sincerity of which she had but too ill treated, when devoted to her.

In the mean time mr. Goodman, in spite of the perplexities his own affairs involved him in, could not help feeling a great concern for those of miss Betsy ; — he knew that mr. Truworth had desisted his visits to her, — that she had got a new lover, who he could not find had consulted the permission of any one but herself, to make his addresses to her ; — the late hours she kept, seldom coming home, 'till some hours after the whole family, except the servant who sat up for her, were in bed, gave him also much matter of uneasiness, and he thought it his duty to talk seriously to her on all these points.

He

He began with asking her, how it happened that he had not seen mr. Truewo for so long a time? To which she replied with the utmost indifference, that she took some things ill from that gentleman, and that, perhaps, he might have some subject of complaint against her, 'Therefore,' said she, 'as our humours did not very well agree, it was best to break off conversation.'

He then questioned her concerning Munden; — 'I hope,' said he, 'you have taken care to inform yourself of his character and circumstances.' 'No truly, sir,' answered she, with the same careless air as before, 'as I never intend to be the better or the worse either, I give myself no pain about what he is.' — Mr. Goodman shook his head, and was going to reason with her on the ill-consequences of such a behaviour when some company coming in, broke off, for a time, all further discourse between them.





CHAP. XX.

Shews miss Betsy left entirely to her own management, and the cause of it, with some other particulars.

- **M**R. Goodman, who had been a little vexed at being interrupted, in the remonstrances he thought so highly necessary should be made to miss Betsy, took an opportunity of renewing them the next morning, in the strongest expressions he was master of.

Miss Betsy, with all her wit, had little to say for herself, in answer to the serious harangue made to her by mr. Goodman, on her present fashion of behaviour; — her heart avowed the justice of his reproofs; but her humour, too tenacious of what pleased itself, and too impatient of controul, would not suffer her to obey the dictates either of his or her own reason. — She knew very well the tender regard he had for her, on the account of her deceased father, and that all he spoke was calculated for her good; but then it was a good she was not at present ambitious of

of attaining, and thought it the privilege of youth to do whatever it listed, provided the rules of virtue were unfringed, so that all that he could get from her was, — that her amusements were innocent, — that she meant no harm in any thing she did, — that it was dull for her to sit at home alone, and when in company could not quit it abruptly, on any consideration of hours.

Mr. Goodman found, that to bring her to a more just sense of what was really her advantage, would be a task impossible for him to accomplish, and began heartily to wish she were under the care of some person, who had more leisure to argue with her, on points so essential to her happiness: — he told her, that he indeed had feared his house would be too melancholly a recess for her, since the revolution that had lately happened in his family, and therefore wished some more proper place could be found for her; — ‘And for such a one,’ said he, ‘I shall make it my business to enquire, — and there seems not only a necessity for my doing so, but that you should also choose another guardian; for as soon as the present unlucky business I am engaged in shall be over, it is my resolution to break up house-keeping, —
‘leave

‘ leave my business to my nephew, Ned
‘ Goodman, whom I expect by the first
‘ ship that arrives from the East-Indies,
‘ and, having once seen him settled, re-
‘ tire, and spend the remainder of my
‘ days in the country.’

The melancholly accents with which
mr. Goodman uttered these words, touched
miss Betsy very much; — she expressed,
in terms the most affectionate, the deep
concern it gave her, that he had any
cause to withdraw from a way of life,
to which he had so long been accustomed;
but added, that if it must be so, she
knew no person so proper, in whose hands
the little fortune she was mistress of should
be entrusted, as those of her brother
Thoughtless, if he would vouchsafe to
take that trouble upon him.

‘ There is no doubt to be made of
‘ that, I believe,’ replied mr. Goodman,
‘ and I shall speak to him about it the
‘ first time I see him.’ — They had some
farther talk on miss Betsy’s affairs, and
that young lady found, he had very large-
ly improved the portion bequeathed her
by her father; for which, in the first emo-
tions of her gratitude, she was beginning
to pour forth such acknowledgments, as
he thought it too much to hear, and in-
terrupted

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errupted her, saying, he had done no more, than his duty obliged him to do, and could not have answered to himself the omission of any part of it.

It is so natural for people to love money, even before they know what to do with it, that it is not to be wondered at, that miss Betsy, now arrived at an age capable of relishing all the delicacies of life, should be transported at finding so considerable, and withal so unexpected, an augmentation of her fortune, which was no less than one third of what her father had left her.

The innate pleasure of her mind, on this occasion, diffused itself through all her form, and gave a double lustre to her eyes and air, so that she went with charms new pointed to a ball that night, for which the obsequious mr. Munden had presented her with a ticket ; — but though she had all the respect in the world for mr. Goodman, and indeed a kind of filial love for him, yet she had it not in her power to pay that regard to his admonitions she ought to have done ; — she came not home till between one and two o'clock in the morning, but was extremely surprised to find, that when she did so, the knocker was taken off the door ;

Miss BESSY THOUGHTLESS. 237

door ; a thing which, in complaisance to her, had never before been done, till she came in, how late soever she stayed abroad : — she was, nevertheless, much more surpris'd, as well as troubled, when on the first rap her chairmen gavé a footman, who waited in the hall for her return, immediately opened the door, and told her, with all the marks of sorrow in his countenance, that his master had been suddenly taken ill, and that his physician, as well as mrs. Barns, the house-keeper, had given strict orders there should be no noise made in the house, the former having said his life depended on his being kept perfectly quiet.

It is not to be doubted, but that, on this information, she went with as little noise as possible up to her chamber, where Nanny, as she was putting her to bed, confirm'd to her what the footman had said, and added, that she had heard the doctor tell mrs. Barns, as he was going out, that he was very apprehensive his patient's disorder would not be easily removed.

Distempers of the body, which arise from those of the mind, are indeed much more difficult to be cured, than those which proceed from meer natural causes.

—Mr.

— Mr. Goodman's resentment for the ill usage he had sustained, from a woman he had so tenderly loved, awhile kept up his spirits, and hindered him from feeling the cruel sting, which preyed upon his vitals, and insensibly slackened the strings of life; but the first hurry being over, and the lawyer having told him, that every thing was drawn up, and his cause would be brought before the commons in a few days, he sunk beneath the apprehensions, — the thoughts of appearing before the doctors of the civil law, to several of whom he was known, to prove his own dishonour, — the talk of the town, — the whispers, — the grimaces, — the ridicule, which he was sensible this affair would occasion when exposed, — the pity of some, — and the contempt he must expect from others; — all these things, though little regarded by him while at a distance, now they came more near at hand, and just ready to fall upon him, gave him such a shock, as all the courage he had assumed was not sufficient to enable him to resist.

He was seized at once with a violent fit of an apoplexy at a coffee-house, where a surgeon being immediately sent for, he was let blood, as is common in such cases. — This operation soon recovered

vered him, so far as speech and motion, but reason had not power to reassume her seat in his disordered brain, for many hours; — he was brought home in a chair, — the surgeon attended him, — saw him put into bed, and sat by him a considerable time, but finding him rather worse than better, told Mrs. Barns, he durst not proceed any further, and that they must have recourse to a physician, which was accordingly done.

This gentleman, who was esteemed the most skilful of his profession, hearing Mr. Goodman frequently cry out, ‘My heart! —my heart!’ laid his hand upon his bosom, and found, by the extraordinary pulsation there, that he had symptoms of an inward convulsion, wrote a prescription, and ordered he should be kept extremely quiet.

Towards morning he grew more composed, and by degrees recovered the use of his understanding as perfectly as ever, but his limbs were so much weakened by that severe attack the fit had made upon him, that he could not sit up in his bed without support. — The physician, however, at his next visit, had great hopes of him, — said his imbecility proceeded only from a fever of the nerves, which
he

he doubted not but to abate, and that he would be well in a few days. — How uncertain, — how little to be depended upon is art, in some cases! — Mr. Goodman felt that within himself, which gave the lie to all appearances, and fully convinced that the hand of death had seized upon his heart, would not defer a moment putting all his affairs in such a posture, as should leave no room for contention among the parties concerned, after his decease: — he began with sending for Mr. Thoughtless, and consigned over to him the whole fortunes of Mr. Francis, and Miss Betsy, the latter being first obliged, as not being yet of age, to chuse him for her guardian in form. — Having thus acquitted himself, in the most honourable manner, of the trust reposed in him, for the children of his friend, he considered what was best to be done, in relation to those of his own blood. — By his death, the intended process against Lady Mellan would be prevented, and consequently the third part of his effects would devolve on her, as being the widow of a citizen; — he, therefore, having consulted with his lawyer, if such a thing were practicable, made a deed of gift to his nephew, Mr. Edward Goodman, of all his money in the bank, stocks, and other public funds. — After this, he made his will,

will, and the lawyer perceiving he had left but few legacies, asked him, how the residue of what he is possessed of should be disposed; to which he replied, ‘Greatly as I have been wronged by lady Mellasin, I would not have her starve: — I have been calculating in my mind to what her dividend may amount, and believe it will be sufficient to enable her to live in that retired manner, which best becomes her age and character.’

Mr. Goodman, having thus settled all his affairs in this world, began to make such preparations for another, as are necessary for the best of men. — In the mean time, as the least noise was disturbing to him, it was judged proper that miss Betsy, who could not live without company, should remove. — No boarding-place to her mind being yet found, and having done with all hopes of living with her brother, (as she was by this time informed of the true reasons he had for her not doing so,) took lodgings in Jermyn-street, and finding the interest of her fortune, through the good management of her late guardian, would allow it, hired a maid and foot-boy to wait upon her.

The adieu she received from mr. Goodman was the most tender and affectionate that could be; — she was very much moved with it, and sincerely lamented the loss she should sustain of so honest and worthy a friend; but her natural sprightliness would not suffer any melancholly reflections to dwell long upon her mind, and the hurry she was in of sending messages to all her acquaintance, with an account of the change of her situation, very much contributed to dissipate them. — This important business was scarce over, and she well settled in her new habitation, when one of mr. Goodman's footmen brought her a letter from her brother Frank, which had been just left for her by the post. — It contained these lines:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear sister,

I HAVE been snatched from the brink of the grave, by the skill of one of the best physicians in the world, and the tender, and, I may say, maternal care of our most dear, and truly valuable friend, the excellent lady Trusty. — The first use I made of my recovered health, is to give an account

any accident throw him in her way, she should be able to rekindle all his former flames, and render him as much her slave as ever. — With this view she never went abroad without casting her eyes about, in search of him; — nay she sometimes even condescended to pass by the house where he was lodged, in hopes of seeing him either going in or out, or from some one or other of the windows; but chance did not befriend her inclinations this way, nor put it in her power again to triumph over a heart, the sincerity of which she had but too ill treated, when devoted to her.

In the mean time mr. Goodman, in spite of the perplexities his own affairs involved him in, could not help feeling a great concern for those of miss Betsy; — he knew that mr. Truworth had desisted his visits to her, — that she had got a new lover, who he could not find had consulted the permission of any one but herself, to make his addresses to her; — the late hours she kept, seldom coming home, 'till some hours after the whole family, except the servant who sat up for her, were in bed, gave him also much matter of uneasiness, and he thought it his duty to talk seriously to her on all these points.

He

He began with asking her, how it happened that he had not seen mr. Trueworth for so long a time? To which she replied, with the utmost indifference, that she took some things ill from that gentleman, and that, perhaps, he might have some subject of complaint against her, — ‘Therefore,’ said she, ‘as our humours did not very well agree, it was best to break off conversation.’

He then questioned her concerning mr. Munden; — ‘I hope,’ said he, ‘you have taken care to inform yourself as to his character and circumstances.’ — ‘No truly, sir,’ answered she, with the same careless air as before, ‘as I never intend to be the better or the worse for either, I give myself no pain about what he is.’ — Mr. Goodman shook his head, and was going to reason with her, on the ill consequences of such a behaviour, when some company coming in, broke off, for a time, all further discourse between them.





CHAP. XX.

Shews miss Betsy left entirely to her own management, and the cause of it, with some other particulars.

• **M**R. Goodman, who had been a little vexed at being interrupted, in the remonstrances he thought so highly necessary should be made to miss Betsy, took an opportunity of renewing them the next morning, in the strongest expressions he was master of.

Miss Betsy, with all her wit, had little to say for herself, in answer to the serious harangue made to her by mr. Goodman, on her present fashion of behaviour; — her heart avowed the justice of his reproofs; but her humour, too tenacious of what pleased itself, and too impatient of controul, would not suffer her to obey the dictates either of his or her own reason. — She knew very well the tender regard he had for her, on the account of her deceased father, and that all he spoke was calculated for her good; but then it was a good she was not at present ambitious of

of attaining, and thought it the privilege of youth to do whatever it listed, provided the rules of virtue were unfringed, so that all that he could get from her was, — that her amusements were innocent, — that she meant no harm in any thing she did, — that it was dull for her to sit at home alone, and when in company could not quit it abruptly, on any consideration of hours.

Mr. Goodman found, that to bring her to a more just sense of what was really her advantage, would be a task impossible for him to accomplish, and began heartily to wish she were under the care of some person, who had more leisure to argue with her, on points so essential to her happiness: — he told her, that he indeed had feared his house would be too melancholly a recess for her, since the revolution that had lately happened in his family, and therefore wished some more proper place could be found for her; — ‘And for such a one,’ said he, ‘I shall
 ‘ make it my business to enquire, — and
 ‘ there seems not only a necessity for ~~my~~
 ‘ doing so, but that you should also
 ‘ choose another guardian; for as soon
 ‘ as the present unlucky business I am en-
 ‘ gaged in shall be over, it is my resolu-
 ‘ tion to break up house-keeping, —
 ‘ leave

‘ leave my business to my nephew, Ned
‘ Goodman, whom I expect by the first
‘ ship that arrives from the East-Indies,
‘ and, having once seen him settled, re-
‘ tire, and spend the remainder of my
‘ days in the country.’

The melancholly accents with which
mr. Goodman uttered these words, touched
miss Betsy very much; — she expressed,
in terms the most affectionate, the deep
concern it gave her, that he had any
cause to withdraw from a way of life,
to which he had so long been accustomed;
but added, that if it must be so, she
knew no person so proper, in whose hands
the little fortune she was mistress of should
be entrusted, as those of her brother
Thoughtless, if he would vouchsafe to
take that trouble upon him.

‘ There is no doubt to be made of
‘ that, I believe,’ replied mr. Goodman,
‘ and I shall speak to him about it the
‘ first time I see him.’ — They had some
farther talk on miss Betsy’s affairs, and
that young lady found, he had very large-
ly improved the portion bequeathed her
by her father; for which, in the first emo-
tions of her gratitude, she was beginning
to pour forth such acknowledgments, as
he thought it too much to hear, and in-
terrupted

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interrupted her, saying, he had done no more, than his duty obliged him to do, and could not have answered to himself the omission of any part of it.

It is so natural for people to love money, even before they know what to do with it, that it is not to be wondered at, that miss Betsey, now arrived at an age capable of relishing all the delicacies of life, should be transported at finding so considerable, and withal so unexpected, an augmentation of her fortune, which was no less than one third of what her father had left her.

The innate pleasure of her mind, on this occasion, diffused itself through all her form, and gave a double lustre to her eyes and air, so that she went with charms new pointed to a ball that night, for which the obsequious mr. Munden had presented her with a ticket; — but though she had all the respect in the world for mr. Goodman, and indeed a kind of filial love for him, yet she had it not in her power to pay that regard to his admonitions she ought to have done; — she came not home till between one and two o'clock in the morning, but was extremely surpris'd to find, that when she did so, the knocker was taken off the door;

door ; a thing which, in complaisance to her, had never before been done, till she came in, how late soever she stayed abroad : — she was, nevertheless, much more surpris'd, as well as troubled, when on the first rap her chairmen gave a footman, who waited in the hall for her return, immediately opened the door, and told her, with all the marks of sorrow in his countenance, that his master had been suddenly taken ill, and that his physician, as well as mrs. Barns, the house-keeper, had given strict orders there should be no noise made in the house, the former having said his life depended on his being kept perfectly quiet.

It is not to be doubted, but that, on this information, she went with as little noise as possible up to her chamber, where Nanny, as she was putting her to bed, confirmed to her what the footman had said, and added, that she had heard the doctor tell mrs. Barns, as he was going out, that he was very apprehensive his patient's disorder would not be easily removed.

Distempers of the body, which arise from those of the mind, are indeed much more difficult to be cured, than those which proceed from meer natural causes.
—Mr.

— Mr. Goodman's resentment for the ill usage he had sustained, from a woman he had so tenderly loved, awhile kept up his spirits, and hindered him from feeling the cruel sting, which preyed upon his vitals, and insensibly slackened the strings of life; but the first hurry being over, and the lawyer having told him, that every thing was drawn up, and his cause would be brought before the commons in a few days, he sunk beneath the apprehensions, — the thoughts of appearing before the doctors of the civil law, to several of whom he was known, to prove his own dishonour, — the talk of the town, — the whispers, — the grimaces, — the ridicule, which he was sensible this affair would occasion when exposed, — the pity of some, — and the contempt he must expect from others; — all these things, though little regarded by him while at a distance, now they came more near at hand, and just ready to fall upon him, gave him such a shock, as all the courage he had assumed was not sufficient to enable him to resist.

He was seized at once with a violent fit of an apoplexy at a coffee-house, where a surgeon being immediately sent for, he was let blood, as is common in such cases. — This operation soon recovered

vered him, so far as speech and motion, but reason had not power to reassume her seat in his disordered brain, for many hours; — he was brought home in a chair, — the surgeon attended him, — saw him put into bed, and sat by him a considerable time, but finding him rather worse than better, told Mrs. Barns, he durst not proceed any further, and that they must have recourse to a physician, which was accordingly done.

This gentleman, who was esteemed the most skilful of his profession, hearing Mr. Goodman frequently cry out, ‘My heart! — my heart!’ laid his hand upon his bosom, and found, by the extraordinary pulsation there, that he had symptoms of an inward convulsion, wrote a prescription, and ordered he should be kept extremely quiet.

Towards morning he grew more composed, and by degrees recovered the use of his understanding as perfectly as ever, but his limbs were so much weakened by that severe attack the fit had made upon him, that he could not sit up in his bed without support. — The physician, however, at his next visit, had great hopes of him, — said his imbecility proceeded only from a fever of the nerves, which
he

he doubted not but to abate, and that he would be well in a few days. — How uncertain, — how little to be depended upon is art, in some cases! — Mr. Goodman felt that within himself, which gave the lie to all appearances, and fully convinced that the hand of death had seized upon his heart, would not defer a moment putting all his affairs in such a posture, as should leave no room for contention among the parties concerned, after his decease: — he began with sending for Mr. Thoughtless, and consigned over to him the whole fortunes of Mr. Francis, and Miss Betsy, the latter being first obliged, as not being yet of age, to chuse him for her guardian in form. — Having thus acquitted himself, in the most honourable manner, of the trust reposed in him, for the children of his friend, he considered what was best to be done, in relation to those of his own blood. — By his death, the intended process against lady Mellasin would be prevented, and consequently the third part of his effects would devolve on her, as being the widow of a citizen; — he, therefore, having consulted with his lawyer, if such a thing were practicable, made a deed of gift to his nephew, Mr. Edward Goodman, of all his money in the bank, stocks, and other public funds. — After this, he made his will,

will, and the lawyer perceiving he had left but few legacies, asked him, how the residue of what he is possessed of should be disposed; to which he replied, ‘ Greatly as I have been wronged by lady Mellasin, I would not have her starve: — I have been calculating in my mind to what her dividend may amount, and believe it will be sufficient to enable her to live in that retired manner, which best becomes her age and character.’

Mr. Goodman, having thus settled all his affairs in this world, began to make such preparations for another, as are necessary for the best of men. — In the mean time, as the least noise was disturbing to him, it was judged proper that miss Betsy, who could not live without company, should remove. — No boarding-place to her mind being yet found, and having done with all hopes of living with her brother, (as she was by this time informed of the true reasons he had for her not doing so,) took lodgings in Jermyn-street, and finding the interest of her fortune, through the good management of her late guardian, would allow it, hired a maid and foot-boy to wait upon her.

The adieu she received from mr. Goodman was the most tender and affectionate that could be; — she was very much moved with it, and sincerely lamented the loss she should sustain of so honest and worthy a friend; but her natural sprightliness would not suffer any melancholly reflections to dwell long upon her mind, and the hurry she was in of sending messages to all her acquaintance, with an account of the change of her situation, very much contributed to dissipate them. — This important business was scarce over, and she well settled in her new habitation, when one of mr. Goodman's footmen brought her a letter from her brother Frank, which had been just left for her by the post. — It contained the lines:

To miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

My dear sister,

I HAVE been snatched from the brink of the grave, by the skill of one of the best physicians in the world, and the tender, and, I may say, maternal care of our most dear, and truly valuable friend, the excellent Mr. Trusty. — The first use I made of my recovered health, is to give an account

any accident throw him in her way, she should be able to rekindle all his former flames, and render him as much her slave as ever. — With this view she never went abroad without casting her eyes about, in search of him; — nay she sometimes even condescended to pass by the house where he was lodged, in hopes of seeing him either going in or out, or from some one or other of the windows; but chance did not befriend her inclinations this way, nor put it in her power again to triumph over a heart, the sincerity of which she had but too ill treated, when devoted to her.

In the mean time Mr. Goodman, in spite of the perplexities his own affairs involved him in, could not help feeling a great concern for those of Miss Betsy; — he knew that Mr. Truworth had desisted his visits to her, — that she had got a new lover, who he could not find had consulted the permission of any one but herself, to make his addresses to her; — the late hours she kept, seldom coming home, 'till some hours after the whole family, except the servant who sat up for her, were in bed, gave him also much matter of uneasiness, and he thought it his duty to talk seriously to her on all these points.

He

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‘ you with my compliments to either —
‘ Farewell. — I think I need not tell you,
‘ that I am,

‘ With an unfeigned regard,
‘ My dear sister,
‘ Your very affectionate brother,
‘ And humble servant,
‘ F. THOUGHTLESS.

‘ P. S. Sir Ralph and lady Trusty are
‘ both from home at this time, or I am
‘ certain their good wishes, if no more,
‘ would have joined mine, that you
‘ may never cease to enjoy whatever it
‘ becomes you to desire. — My dear
‘ Betsy, adieu.’

The joy, which this letter would have afforded miss Betsy, had been compleat, if not somewhat abated by the apprehensions of what her brother would say to her, when he should find she was indeed intirely broke off with mr. Truworth; but as the reader may probably desire to know in what manner he pass’d his time after that event, and the motives which induced him to stay in London, it is now highly proper to say something of both.

CHAP. XXI.

The author is under some apprehensions, will not be quite pleasing to the humour of every reader.

IT is certain that mr. Truworth, at the time of his writing his last letter to miss Betsy, was fully determined to go into the country, and was already beginning to make such preparations, as he found necessary for his journey, when an accident of a very singular nature put a sudden stop to them, and to his intentions.

He was one day just dressed, and going out, in order to dine with some company, for he now chose to be as little alone as possible, when one of his servants delivered a letter to him, which he said was brought by a porter, who waited below for an answer. — As the superscription was in a woman's hand, and he was not accustomed to receive any billets from that sex, he broke it open, with a kind of greedy curiosity, and found in it these lines :

M 3

To

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

SIR,

I AM a woman of fortune, family,
 and an unblemished character; —
 very young, and most people allow
 not disagreeable: — you have done me
 the greatest injury in the world without
 knowing it; but I take you to be more
 a man of honour, than not to be wil-
 ling to make what reparation is in your
 power. — If the good opinion I have
 of you does not deceive me, you will
 readily accept this challenge, and not
 fail to meet me about eleven o'clock
 to-morrow in the morning, at General
 Tatton's bench, opposite Rosamond's
 Pond, in St. James's Park, — there to
 hear such interrogatories as I shall think
 fit to make you, and on your sincere
 answer to which, depends the whole fu-
 ture peace, if not the life of her, who,
 at present, can only subscribe herself,

In the greatest confusion,

SIR,

Your unfortunate,

And impatient

INCOGNITA.

Mr.

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS: 247

Mr. Truworth was a good deal surpris'd, but had no occasion to consult with himself in what manner it would come a man of his years to behave in such an adventure, and therefore sat down and immediately wrote an answer in these terms:

To the fair INCOGNITA.

Madam,

THOUGH a challenge from an unknown antagonist might be rejected without any danger of incurring the imputation of cowardice; and, besides, as the combat to which I am invited is to be that of words, in which your sex are generally allowed to excel, I have not any sort of chance for overcoming; yet to shew that I dare encounter a fine woman at any weapon, and shall not repine at being foiled, will not fail to give you the triumph you desire, and to that end will wait on you exactly, at the time and place mentioned in yours, — till when you may rest satisfied that I am,

With the greatest impatience,

The obliging INCOGNITA'S

Most devoted servant,

C. TRUEWORTH.

M 4

Though

Though mr. Truworth had not only heard of, but also experienced, when on his travels abroad, some adventures of a parallel nature with this, yet as it never had entered into his head, that the English ladies took this method of introducing themselves to the acquaintance of those they were pleased to favour, the challenge of the incognita, — who she was, — where she had seen him, — what particular action of his had merited her good graces, and a thousand other conjectures, all tending to the same object, very much engrossed his mind. — Indeed he was glad to encourage any thoughts, which served to drive those of miss Bettythence, whose idea, in spite of all his endeavours, and her supposed unworthiness, would sometimes intervene, and poison the sweets of his most jovial moments among his friends.

His curiosity, for it cannot be said he was as yet instigated by a warmer passion, rendered him however very careful not to suffer the hour mentioned in the lady's letter to escape; but though he was at the place somewhat before the time, she was the first, and already waited his approach. — As he turned by the corner of the pond, he began to reflect, that as she had

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had given him no signal, whereby she might be known, he might possibly mistake for his Incognita some other, whom chance might have directed to the bench, and was somewhat at a loss how to accost her, in such a manner, as that the compliment might not make him be looked upon as rude or mad, by a person who had no reason to expect it from him.

But the lady, who, it is likely, was also sensible she had been a little wanting in this part of the assignation, soon eased him of the suspense he was in, by rising from her seat, as he drew near, and saluting him with these words, — ‘How perfectly obliging,’ said she, ‘is this punctuality? — It almost flatters me I shall have no reason to repent the step I have taken.’ — ‘A person who is injured,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘has doubtless a right to complain; and if I have, though never so unwarily, been guilty of any wrong, cannot be too hasty, nor too zealous in the reparation; — be pleased therefore, madam, to let me know the nature of my offence, and be assured, that the wishes of my whole heart shall be to expiate it.’

In concluding these words, one of her gloves being off, he took hold of her hand, and kiss'd it with either a real, or a seeming warmth. — 'Take care what you say,' cried she, 'lest I exact more from you, than is in your power to perform; but let us sit down,' pursued she, suffering him still to keep her hand in his, 'and beginning to fulfil the promise you have made, by satisfying me in some few points I have to ask, with the same sincerity as you would answer heaven.' — 'Be assured I will,' said he, putting her hand a second time to his mouth, 'and this shall be the book on which I will swear to every article.'

'First then,' demanded she, 'Are you married, or contracted?' — 'Neither, by all that's dear,' said he. — 'Have you no attachment,' resumed she, 'to any particular lady, that should hinder your engaging with another?' — 'Not any upon my honour,' answered he.

I should before now have acquainted my reader, that the lady was not only masqued, but also close muffled in her hood, that Mr. Truworth could discover no part even of the side of her face, which, growing weary of this examination,
 he

Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 251

he took an opportunity to complain of.

— ‘Why this unkind reserve, my charming Incognita?’ said he, ‘I have heard of penitents, who, while confessing crimes they were ashamed of, kept their faces hid, but I believe there never was a confessor who concealed himself, — permit me to see to whom I am laying open my heart, and I shall do it with pleasure.’ — ‘That cannot be,’ answered she, ‘even for the very reason you have alledged: — I have something to confess to you, would sink me into the earth with shame, did you behold the mouth that utters it. — In fine, I love you, and after having told you so, can you expect I will reveal myself.’ — ‘Else how can I return the bounty as I ought,’ cried he, ‘or you be assured you have not lavished your favours on an insensible or ungrateful heart?’

‘Time may do much,’ said she; — ‘a longer and more free conversation with you may perhaps embolden me to make a full discovery of my face to you, as I have already done of my heart.’ — Mr. Truworth then told her, that the place they were in would allow but very few freedoms, and added, that if he were really so happy as she flattered him he was, she must permit him to wait on her,

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where he might have an opportunity of testifying the sense he had of so unhop'd, and as yet so unmerited a blessing.

‘Atlas!’ cried she, ‘I am quite a novice in assignations of this sort, — I have so entire a dependance on your honour, that I dare meet you any where, provided you give me your solemn promise not to take any measures for knowing who I am, nor make any attempts to oblige me to unmask, till I have assumed courage enough to become visible of my own free will.’

Mr. Truworth readily enough gave her the promise she exacted from him, not at all doubting but he should be easily able to find means to engage her consent for the satisfaction of his curiosity; in these points. — ‘Well then,’ said she, ‘it belongs to you to name a place proper for these secret interviews.’

On this, after a little pause, he answered, that since she judg'd it inconvenient for him to wait upon her at home, or any other place where she was known, he would be about the close of day at a certain coffee-house, which he nam'd to her. — ‘Where,’ continued he, ‘I will attend

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attend your commands, and on your
‘ condescending to stop at the door in a
‘ hackney coach, will immediately come
‘ forth, and conduct you to a house se-
‘ cure from all danger of discovery.’ —
‘ She hesitated not a moment to comply
‘ with his proposal, yet in the same breath
‘ she did so, affected to be under some
‘ fears, which before she had not
‘ made the least shew of; — said, she
hoped he would not abuse the confi-
dence she reposed in him, — that he would
take no advantage of the weakness she
had shewn, — that though she loved him
with the most tender passion, and could
not have lived without revealing it to
him; yet her inclinations were innocent,
and pure as those of a vestal virgin, and
a great deal more stuff of the like sort,
which though mr. Truworth could scarce
refrain from smiling at, yet he answered
with all the seriousness imaginable, — ‘ I
‘ should be unworthy, madam, of the af-
‘ fection you honour me with,’ said he,
‘ were I capable of acting towards you
‘ in any manner unbecoming of you, or
‘ of myself; and you may depend I shall
‘ endeavour to regulate my desires, so as
‘ to render them agreeable to yours.’

After

After some further discourse of the like nature, she rose up, and took her leave, insisting at parting, that he should not attempt to follow her, or take any method to find out what way she went; which injunction he punctually obeyed, not stirring from the bench, 'till she was quite out of sight.

This adventure prodigiouſly amused him; — never, in his whole life, had he met with any thing he knew ſo little how to judge of. — She had nothing of the air of a woman of the town, and beſides, he knew it was not the intereſt of thoſe, who made a trade of their favours, to diſpenſe them in the manner ſhe ſeemed to intend; — nor could he think her a perſon of the condition and character her letter intimated. He could not conceive, that any of thoſe he was acquainted with, would run ſuch lengths for the gratification of their paſſion, eſpecially for a man, who had not taken the leaſt pains to inſpire it. — Sometimes he imagined it was a trick put upon him, in order to make trial how far his vanity would extend in boaſting of it; — it even came into his head, that miſs Betsy herſelf might get ſomebody to perſonate the amorous incognita, for no other purpoſe than to
divert

divert herself, and disappoint his high raised expectation; but this last conjecture dwelt not long upon him: — he had heard she now entertained another lover, with whom she was very much taken up, and, consequently, would not give herself so much trouble about one, who had entirely quitted her. — In fine, he knew not what to think, as he could not tell how to believe he had made such an impression upon any woman, without knowing it, as the Incognita pretended, he was apt to imagine he should neither see nor hear any more of her. — This uncertainty, however, employed his mind the whole day, and he was no less impatient for the proof, than he would have been, if actually in love with his invisible mistress.

The wished-for hour at last arrived, and he waited not long before he was eased of one part of his suspense, by being told, a lady in a hackney coach enquired for him: — he was extremely pleased to find, at least, he had not been imposed upon, by a trick of any of his frolicksome companions, and immediately flew to the coach side, where seeing it was indeed his Incognita, he jumped directly in, with a transport, which, doubtless, was very agreeable to her.

Though

Though he had often heard some gentlemen speak of houses, where two persons of different sexes might at any time be received, and have the privilege of entertaining each other with all the freedom and privacy they could desire, yet as he had never been accustomed to intrigues of this nature, and thought he should have no occasion to make use of such places, he had not given himself the trouble of asking where they might be found, therefore had now no other resource, than either a tavern, or a bagnio, the latter of which he looked upon, for more reasons than one, as the most commodious of the two, so ordered the coachman to drive to one in Silver-street; — he excused himself at the same time to the lady, for not having been able to provide a better asylum for her reception; but she appeared perfectly content, — told him, she had put herself under his care, — relied upon his honour and discretion, — and left all to his direction.

Being come into the bagnio, they were shewed into a handsome large room, with a bed-chamber within it. — Mr. Frueworth had his eye on every thing in an instant, and finding all was right, ordered a supper to be prepared, and then told the

the waiter, he would dispence with his attendance, till it was ready. — As soon as he found himself alone with his Incognita, ‘ Now, my angel,’ said he, embracing her, ‘ I have an opportunity to thank you for the affection you have flattered me with the hopes of, but at the same time must complain of the little proofs you give me of it; — the greatest stranger to your heart would be allowed the privilege of a salute, yet I am denied the pleasure of touching those dear lips, which have denounced my happiness.’ — ‘ Do not reproach me,’ answered she, ‘ with denying what is not yet in my power to grant; — I cannot let you see my face, and you have promised not to force me.’ — ‘ I have,’ replied he; ‘ but that promise binds me not from indulging my impatient wishes with things you have not stipulated: — your neck, your breasts are free, and those I will be revenged upon.’ — With these words he took some liberties with her, which may better be conceived than described; — she but faintly resisted, and, perhaps, would have permitted him to take greater thus masqued, but the discovery of her face was what he chiefly wanted: ‘ You might, at least,’ cried he, ‘ oblige me with a touch of those lovely lips, I am forbid

‘ forbid to gaze upon, — here is a dark
 ‘ recess,’ continued he, pointing to the
 inner room, ‘ will save your blushes.’ —
 He then raised her from the chair, and
 drawing her gently towards the door,
 sung, in a very harmonious voice, this
 stanza :

‘ Away with this idle, this scrupulous fear,
 ‘ For a kiss in the dark,
 ‘ Cry’d the amorous spark,
 ‘ There is nothing, no nothing too dear.’

Having led her into the chamber, and
 seated her on the bed, which happened to
 be so disposed, that no gleam of light
 came upon it, from the candles in the
 next room, — ‘ Now, my charmer,’ said
 he, taking hold of her mask, ‘ you
 ‘ have no excuse for keeping on this in-
 ‘ viduous cloud.’ — ‘ How impossible is
 ‘ it,’ answered she, letting it fall into his
 hand, ‘ to refuse you any thing!’

What conversation after this passed be-
 tween them, I shall leave to the reader’s
 imagination, and only say, that the voice
 of the Incognita being more distinguish-
 able by the button of her mask being
 removed, Mr. Truworth could not
 thinking, he had heard before
 very like those with which he was now

enter-

entertained, though where, or from what mouth they had proceeded, he was not able to recollect.

This conjecture, however, rendering him more impatient than ever for the discovery; he omitted nothing in his power, either by words or actions, to dissuade her from re-assuming her vizard, when they should quit that scene of darkness. — ‘How gladly would I comply,’ cried she, ‘but that I fear —.’ ‘Fear what!’ cried Mr. Truworth, eagerly interrupting her. — ‘I fear to lose you,’ replied she, fondly embracing him; — ‘my face is already but too well known to you; — you have often seen it, but seen it without those emotions I endeavour to inspire: — how then can I now hope it will have the effect I wish!’ — ‘Unkindly judged,’ said he, ‘with what indifference soever I may have regarded you, the endearing softness, the enchanting transports you have now blessed me with, would give new charms to every feature, and make me find perfections I never saw before. — Come then,’ my goddess,’ continued he, raising her, ‘shine with full lustre on me, and be my adorers.’ — ‘Well,’ cried she, ‘you are not to be resisted, and I will venture.’

These

These words brought them to the chamber door, and shewed the Incognita to her amazed gallant, to be no other than miss Flora. — ‘ Miss Flora Mellasin! — Good heavens!’ cried he. — ‘ You seem surpris’d and shock’d,’ said she: — ‘ alas! my apprehensions were too just.’ — ‘ Pardon me, madam,’ answered he, ‘ I am indeed surpris’d, but it is through an excess of joy; — could I have ever thought, the favours I have received were bestowed by the amiable miss Flora Mellasin!’

It is certain, that his astonishment at first was very great; but recovering himself from it in a short time, a thousand passages in miss Flora’s former behaviour towards him occurred to his remembrance; and made him wonder at himself for not having sooner found her out, in the person of his Incognita. — They passed their time, till the night was pretty far advanced, in a manner very agreeable to each other, nor parted without reciprocal assurance of renewing this tender intercourse the next day, at the same place.





C H A P. XXII.

Gives an account of a farther, and more laudable motive, to induce mr. Truworth to put off his intended journey into the country.

THOUGH it is impossible for a man of sense to have any real love for a woman, whom he cannot esteem, yet mr. Truworth found enough in the agreeable person and sprightly humour of miss Flora, to dissipate those uneasy reflections, which, in spite of him, had lurked in his mind, on miss Betsy's account: — the amour with this fond girl afforded him a pleasing amusement for a time, and, without filling his heart with a new passion, cleared it of those remains of his former one, which he had taken so much pains to extirpate.

Whenever he thought of miss Betsy, as it was impossible a young lady, he once had loved with so much tenderness, should not sometimes come into his thoughts, it was only with a friendly concern for her imagined fall.—‘It is no wonder,’ would he often say to himself, ‘that so young,
‘ and

‘ and lovely a creature, under the tuition
 ‘ of a woman of lady Mellasin’s character,
 ‘ and the constant companion of one of
 ‘ miss Flora’s disposition, endued with
 ‘ charms to excite the warmest wishes,
 ‘ and unprovided with sufficient arms for
 ‘ her defence, should have yielded to the
 ‘ temptations of an unwarrantable flame.’
 — In fine, he pitied her, but no more.

Thus entirely freed from all prepos-
 session, and his heart almost in the same
 situation, as before he never knew what
 it was to love, he was easily persuaded
 by his friends to give over all thoughts of
 going into the country, and stay to par-
 take, in a moderate way, those pleasures
 of the town, which the many uneasy mo-
 ments he had sustained, during his court-
 ship with miss Betsy, had kept him hi-
 therto from having any relish for.

But this state of indifference lasted not
 long, — an object presented itself to him,
 inspiring him with a passion, which had
 so much of reason for its guide, as made
 him think it rather his glory, than his
 misfortune, to be a second time enslaved.

Among all the friends and acquaint-
 tance he had in town, there was none he
 more valued and esteemed, than sir Basil
 Loveit:

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Loveit: — they had been for some time inseparable companions; but accidents, either on the one side or the other, having hindered their meeting for several days, Mr. Truworth went one morning to visit him at his house: — he found him at home, but the hall so incumbered with trunks and boxes, that there was scarce a passage to the parlour door. — ‘Welcome, my dear friend,’ said Sir Bazil, who, having seen him from a window, run down stairs to receive him; ‘you find me in a strange disorder here, but I have got a couple of women out of the country, and that sex, I think, like a general officer, can never move without a waggon load of trumpery at their tail.’ — ‘What, married!’ cried Mr. Truworth. — ‘No faith,’ said the other, ‘but the arrival of two sisters last night from Staffordshire, gives me a sort of specimen of the hurry I am to expect when I become a husband.’

‘The hurry,’ said Mr. Truworth, ‘you seem to complain of, must needs be a very agreeable one; and I heartily congratulate you upon it. — A single man, like you, makes but a very solitary figure, in a great wild house; — these ladies will fill the vacuum, and give a double life to your family.’ —

‘Nay,’

‘ Nay,’ resumed sir Basil, ‘ I shall not
 ‘ have them long with me, — they hate
 ‘ London, and never come but once in
 ‘ two years, to buy cloaths, and see
 ‘ fashions; — besides one of them is
 ‘ married, and the other so fond of her
 ‘ sister, that I believe she would not quit
 ‘ her to be a dutchess. — Indeed it is not
 ‘ much to be wondered at, our mother
 ‘ dying when she was very young, Har-
 ‘ riot, for so she is called, was brought
 ‘ up under her sister, who is eight years
 ‘ older than herself, and they never have
 ‘ been asunder two days in their lives.’

Mr. Truworth then expatiated on the
 amiableness of such an harmony between
 persons of the same blood; to which sir
 Basil replied, that it was more than or-
 dinary fortunate for his sisters; — ‘ for,’
 said he, ‘ the elder of them being mar-
 ‘ ried just before my mother’s death, my
 ‘ father committed to her the care of the
 ‘ younger, as she was reckoned a woman
 ‘ of greater prudence than might be ex-
 ‘ pected from her years. — My brother
 ‘ Wellair, for that is the name of the
 ‘ gentleman she married, though a very
 ‘ good husband in the main, is a great
 ‘ sportsman, takes rather too much de-
 ‘ light in his hawks and hounds, and
 ‘ gives his wife but little of his company
 ‘ in

in the day, so that if it were not for Harriot she would pass her time uncomfortably enough. — In fine, the younger is improved by the lessons of the elder, and the elder diverted by the sprightliness and good humour of the younger.

Sir Bazil, who had an extreme regard for his sisters, could not forbear entertaining Mr. Truworth on this subject all the time he was there, and at parting told him, he would not ask him to stay dinner that day, because he supposed they would be very busy in unpacking their things, and setting themselves in order, but engaged him to come on the following

Mr. Truworth thought no farther on what had passed, than to remember his promise, which he accordingly fulfilled. — Sir Bazil received him with open arms, and conducted him into the dining-room, where the two ladies were sitting: — they were both very handsome: — the elder was extremely graceful, and, at first glance, appeared to be the most striking beauty of the two; but on a second, the younger had the advantage: — she was not altogether so tall as her sister, nor

had a skin of that dazzling whiteness, but her shape was exquisite, — her complexion clear, — her eyes sparkling, — all her features perfectly regular, and accompanied with a sweetness, which had in it somewhat irresistably attractive.

After the first compliments were over, neither of them lost, by their manner of conversation, any part of that admiration which their eyes had gained. — Mrs. Wellair talked pretty much, yet so agreeably, that no body could be tired of hearing her: — Miss Harriot spoke much less, but all she said discovered a delicacy of sentiment, and a judgment far above her years. — Sir Bazil had a large estate, he lived up to the height of it, had a very elegant taste, and in complaisance to his sisters, as well as to his friend, who had never dined with him before since he set up housekeeping, had taken care that day to omit nothing in his bill of fare, that could excite, or gratify, the most luxurious appetite; yet it was the wit, spirit, and good humour of the company, especially of Miss Harriot, which, to Mr. Truworth, made the most agreeable part of the entertainment.

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When the desert was over, and the healths of absent friends toasted in Tokay and Frontinac, they all adjourned into the drawing-room, where coffee and tea were soon after brought in; — Mrs. Wellair having been advised by her physicians to refrain the use of any of these liquors, on account of some disorder she had complained of, took this opportunity of desiring leave to retire, in order to acquaint her husband, it being post-night, with her safe arrival in town.

Agreeable as her conversation was, Mr. Truworth found no miss of her, as the lovely Harriot was left behind: — on the contrary, he was rather rejoiced, in the hope she would now give her tongue a greater latitude than she had done in the presence of one, whom he easily perceived, she looked upon as her superior in understanding, as well as years; and to provoke her to it, artfully introduced some discourse on the pleasures of the town, and said to Sir Basil, it seemed to him a kind of miracle, that so young and beautiful a lady, as Miss Harriot, could content herself with the obscurity of a country life. — ‘Few of her age, indeed,’ replied Sir
N 2 Basil,

Bazil, ' would choofe to live in the
 ' manner ſhe does, but though I ſhould,
 ' perhaps, not be of the ſame way of
 ' thinking, if I were a woman, and in her
 ' place, yet I cannot but ſay, my reaſon
 ' approves of her conduct in this point.'

' London,' ſaid ſhe, ' is a very mag-
 ' nificent, opulent city, and thoſe who
 ' have their lot caſt to live in it, may,
 ' doubtleſs, find ſufficient to content
 ' them; but as for thoſe amuſements,
 ' which you gentlemen call the pleaſures
 ' of the town, and which ſo many people
 ' take every winter ſuch long journies
 ' merely to enjoy, I can ſee nothing in
 ' them, which a reaſonable perſon may
 ' not very well diſpenſe with the want
 ' of.'

' What think you of the court, ma-
 ' dam?' cried mr. Truworth. — ' As
 ' of a place I would always choofe to
 ' avoid, replied ſhe; — I heartily pity
 ' the fatigue of thoſe, who are obliged
 ' to attend, and am tempted to laugh at
 ' the ſtupidity of thoſe, who undertake
 ' it without neceſſity. — I am amazed to
 ' think how any one of common ſenſe
 ' can be at ſo great an expence for rich
 ' cloaths, to go to a place where ſhe
 ' muſt

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‘ must suffer as great pain in shewing
‘ them. — Bless me! to stand for two or
‘ three hours together, mute as a fish,—
‘ upright as an arrow, and when the scene
‘ is over, walk backward like a crab,
‘ curtsying at every step, though their
‘ legs are so tired, they are scarce able to
‘ go through the ceremony.’

‘ A masquerade then,’ resumed mr.
Trueworth, willing to try her farther;
‘ what say you madam to a masquerade?
‘ I hope you will allow no freedom of
‘ behaviour is wanting there.’ — ‘ I
‘ should like a masquerade extremely,’
answered she, ‘ if conducted in the same
‘ manner I have been told they are in
‘ Italy, and some other places, where
‘ only persons of condition are admitted,
‘ and none presumes to say that under a
‘ vizard, which he either would, or ought
‘ to be ashamed of, when it is pluck’d
‘ off; — but the venal ones you have
‘ here, are my utter detestation; — they
‘ seem to me to licence, under a shew of
‘ innocent diversion, not only folly, but
‘ all kind of prophaneness, and inde-
‘ cency.’

‘ It must be owned, madam,’ said mr.
Trueworth, ‘ that your sentiments on

‘ both these subjects are extremely *just*,
 ‘ but you can have no such objection
 ‘ against a play, or opera.’ — ‘ No, sir,’ —
 answered she, ‘ I look upon a good play
 ‘ as one of the most improving, as well
 ‘ as agreeable entertainments, a thinking
 ‘ mind can take: — and as for an opera,
 — ‘ Aye sister,’ cried sir Basil, interrupt-
 ing her, ‘ the opera, — take care what
 ‘ you say of the opera; — my friend
 ‘ here is a passionate lover of musick,
 ‘ and if you utter one syllable against his
 ‘ favourite science, you will certainly pass
 ‘ in his opinion for a stoic.’ — ‘ I should
 ‘ deserve it,’ said she, ‘ and be in reality
 ‘ as insensible as that sect of philosophers
 ‘ affect to be, if I were not capable of
 ‘ being touched by the charms of har-
 ‘ mony.’

‘ Then, madam,’ said mr. Truworth,
 ‘ there are two of the pleasures of Lon-
 ‘ don, which are so happy to receive
 ‘ you approbation.’ — ‘ Not only my ap-
 ‘ probation,’ replied she, ‘ but my ap-
 ‘ plause. — I am, indeed, a very great
 ‘ admirer of both, yet can find ways to
 ‘ make myself easy, without being pre-
 ‘ sent at either, and, at the distance of a
 ‘ hundred miles, enjoy in theory all the
 ‘ satis-

‘ satisfaction the representation could afford.’

‘ This is somewhat extraordinary, indeed madam,’ cried mr. Truworth; ‘ be so good as to let us know by what method.’ — It is this, sir,’ answered she; ‘ — as for the plays, — I have a very good collection of the old ones by me, and have all the new ones sent down to me as they come out; — when I was last in London, I was several times at the theatre, — I observed how the actors and actresses varied their voices and gestures, according to the different characters they appeared in on the stage; — and thus, whilst I am reading any play, am enabled to judge pretty near how it shews in representation. — I have, indeed, somewhat more difficulty in bringing the opera home to me, yet I am so happy, as to be able to procure a shadow of it at least; — we have two or three gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who play to great perfection on the violin, and several ladies, who have very pretty voices, and some skill in music; — my sister touches the bass-viol finely, and I play a little on the harpsichord; — we have all our parts in score before us, which we execute

‘ to the best of our power : — it serves
 ‘ however, to divert ourselves, and those
 ‘ friends who think it worth their while
 ‘ to come to hear us.’

Mr. Truworth cried out, in a kind of rapture, as soon as she had done speaking, — ‘ Who would not think himself
 ‘ happy to be one of the audience at such
 ‘ a performance ?’ — He was going on, but mrs. Wellair returned, on which he directed the compliments he was about to make miss Harriot, equally to the other ; — which she returned with a great deal of politeness. — The conversation afterwards turned on different subjects, and was very entertaining ; — some other company coming in, mr. Truworth would have taken leave, but sir Basil would not permit him, — he stayed the whole evening, and when he went home, carried with him such an idea of the lovely Harriot’s perfections, that scarce any consideration would have been powerful enough to have made him quit the town, while she continued in it.



CH A P. XXIII.

Returns to miss Betsy's adventures, from which the two former were but a digression, though a very necessary one, as will hereafter appear.

IF miss Betsy had been made acquainted with the manner in which mr. Trueworth pass'd his time, and the inducements he had to stay in London, doubtless her vanity would have been highly piqued; but she had not as yet this subject for mortification; on the contrary, she rather imagined he lingered here on her account, — that he repented him of the letter he had sent her, though his spirit was too great to acknowledge it directly, and waited the arrival of her brother Frank, in hopes of engaging him to make his peace.

With these suggestions did she please herself, whenever he came into her mind; but indeed she had but little room for meditation on his account; — not only mr. Munden plied her close with presents,

— treats, — fine speeches, and all ^{the} tokens of impatient love, but she ^{had} also another conquest of a more late, ^{and} consequently to a young lady of her humour, a more pleasing æra.

She had been one day at her mantua-maker's, to consult on some matters relating to her dress, and was a little surprised to see the woman come the next morning, before she was out of bed, to her lodgings. — ‘ Heyday, mrs. Modely,’ cried she, ‘ what brings you here thus early?’ — ‘ Indeed, inadam,’ answered she, ‘ I could not well come out; — I have eight or nine gowns in the house now, which should all have been finished, and sent home to-day; — the ladies will tear me to pieces about them, but I left all my business, and run away to acquaint you with a thing you little dream of. — Ah! miss Betsey, such a fine gentleman! — such a vast estate! — but ’tis no wonder,’ continued she, ‘ you are so pretty, that you make all the men die for you.’ — ‘ What is it you are talking on?’ cried miss Betsey, ‘ prithee dear Modely explain.’ — ‘ Lord!’ replied the other, ‘ I am so transported, that I know not how to contain myself; — but I will tell you, — you were
yester-

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‘ yesterday at my house, — sir Frederick
‘ Finer, who lodges in my first floor, —
‘ the sweetest and most generous gentle-
‘ man that ever lived, to be sure ; — but
‘ that is nothing to the purpose, — he
‘ saw you from his dining-room window,
‘ when you came out of your chair, —
‘ and, would you believe it, was so
‘ struck, that he immediately fell down
‘ in a swoon : — you were but just gone,
‘ when his valet de chambre, for he
‘ keeps three servants, two in livery, and
‘ one out, came down to me, and fetched
‘ me to his master. — ‘ Oh ! mrs. Mode-
‘ ly,’ said he to me, ‘ what angel have
‘ you got below ? — Tell me who she
‘ is ? — If she is not already married, I
‘ will give my whole estate to obtain
‘ her. — I ask not what her fortune is,
‘ — if I could once call that divine
‘ creature my wife, she should command
‘ all I am worth.’

‘ Indeed, madam,’ continued she, ‘ I
‘ was so much amazed, that I had not
‘ the power of speaking ; and he, I sup-
‘ pose, interpreting my silence as a re-
‘ fusal of answering his demands, fell
‘ into such distractions, — such ravings,
‘ as frightened me almost out of my wits,
‘ and at last, to quiet him, I told him,

‘ — I hope you will forgive me, — your
 ‘ name, and where you lived, and that
 ‘ you were not married : — on this he
 ‘ seemed pretty easy, and I left him ; —
 ‘ but about two hours after, he sent for
 ‘ me again, — desired I would go direct-
 ‘ ly to you, — make you a declaration of
 ‘ love in his name, and beg you to give
 ‘ him leave to visit you in person.’

‘ Bless me !’ cried miss Betsy, ‘ can
 ‘ the man neither speak, nor write for
 ‘ himself?’ — ‘ I told him, madam,’
 resumed mrs. Modely, ‘ that it would
 ‘ not be well taken from me ; — But he
 ‘ was quite mad, would listen to no
 ‘ reason, ’till I bethought myself of a
 ‘ stratagem, which, I fancy, you will not
 ‘ disapprove : — I made him believe,
 ‘ that there was no need of my going
 ‘ to you, — that you were to call upon
 ‘ me about a gown this afternoon, —
 ‘ that I would persuade you to stay and
 ‘ drink tea, and he might come into the
 ‘ room, as if by chance, and entertain
 ‘ you with what discourse he thought
 ‘ proper. — Now I would fain have you
 ‘ come,’ pursued she ; ‘ for if you do
 ‘ but like his person, such an offer is not
 ‘ to be rejected.’

‘ I do not regard the offer,’ said miss Betsy ; ‘ but I do not know but I may ‘ come just to divert myself a little.’ — ‘ That’s a dear good lady,’ cried the ‘ other. — About five, I believe, will ‘ be a proper time.’ — ‘ Aye thereabout,’ replied miss Betsy ; ‘ but, dear Modely, ‘ don’t let him know you have spoke a ‘ word to me concerning him.’ — ‘ No, ‘ — no,’ said she, ‘ I shall not tell him ‘ I have seen you.’

During the whole time this woman stayed, which was, indeed, much longer than might have been expected, from a person of that extraordinary business she pretended, nothing was talked on but sir Frederick Fincer ; — she told miss Betsy, that to her certain knowledge, he was of one of the best families in Cornwall ; that he had a great estate in possession, and another in reversion, and, besides, was the next of kin to a coronet ; that he kept company with nothing but lords and dukes, and that they were always courting his company.

Though miss Betsy affected to treat all she said with indifference, yet she had given an attentive ear to it, and after she
was

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was gone, began to rumage over all *her* ornaments, — tryed one, and then another, to see which would become her best, in order to secure a victory, which she imagined would afford so much triumph. — ‘ Whether I marry him or not, said she to herself, ‘ the addresses of a ‘ man of his rank will make me of some ‘ consideration in the world; — and if ‘ ever I do become a wife, I should like ‘ to be a woman of quality; — they may ‘ say what they will, but a title has prodigious charms in it; — the name of ‘ Fineer also becomes it; — lady Fineer’s ‘ servants there! — lady Fineer’s coach ‘ to the door, would sound vastly agreeable at the play or opera.’

She also pleased herself with the thought, that being courted by a person of sir Frederick’s quality, and estate, would immediately put to silence all the reproaches and remonstrances she might otherwise have expected to be persecuted with, by her brother Frank, on mr. Trueworth’s account; — and this imagination was, of itself, sufficient to give her an infinite satisfaction: — in fine, she found so much in this new effect of her charms, to elevate and delight both her vanity and convenience, that she longed with as much
impatience

impatience for a sight of her admirer, as Mrs. Modely had told her he was under, for a second interview with her.

Some part of the tedious moments were, however, taken up, in a manner she was far from expecting: — she was scarce risen from her toilette, when word was brought her, that a young lady, who called herself Miss Flora Mellasin, was come to wait upon her. As she had never seen her since her being driven from Mr. Goodman's, the visit a little surpris'd her, and she would have been glad, if common civility had dispensed with her receiving it; for though the pity she then had felt for her misfortunes, had greatly effaced the memory of the injurious treatment she had met with from her, yet she never desired to continue any correspondence with her, after they were once parted: besides, as she had no reason to look upon her coming as any proof of her friendship or good-will, but rather with a design of doing her some private prejudice, she resolv'd to behave entirely reserved towards her.

Her conjectures were not groundless: — that complication of every worst passion that can fill the human heart, could
not

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not be perfectly satisfied, even amidst the most unbounded gratification of her amorous desires, with the man that had excited them: — the dread of losing him embittered all the transports of possession; she very well knew he had broke off with miss Betfy, and doubted not but that event had happened through the artifice she had put in practice; yet as there was a possibility, that the adventure of Denham should be unravelled, and the innocence of miss Betfy cleared up, she trembled lest such an eclairsissement should renew all his former tendernefs for that once so much loved rival, and herself be reduced to all the horrors of despair and shame. — It was, therefore, to sound the inclination of miss Betfy, that alone brought her thither, in the wicked hope, that if there was the least probability of a reconciliation between them, she might find some opportunity of traversing all the steps that might be taken by either party for that purpose.

But miss Betfy was too much upon her guard, to give her any room to discover what her sentiments were in that point: — she received her very coolly, and even on her first entrance told her, that she was obliged to go out that evening; but the

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the other taking no notice of the little pleasure *miss* Betsy expressed on seeing her, told her, she came out of friendship to visit her; — that she had been told *mr.* Truworth and she were entirely parted; — that if she had so great an affection for *him*, as the world had been pleased to say, she must certainly stand in need of all the consolation could be given her: — ‘but, I hope, my dear,’ said she, ‘you have too much good sense, not to despise him now. Nothing is more common than that men should be false. — Remember what the poet says:

“Ingratitude’s the sin, which, first or
“last,

“Taints the whole sex; the catching
“court-disease.”

Miss Betsy was so provoked at being talked to in this manner, that she replied, That there was neither falsehood nor ingratitude in the case; — if *mr.* Truworth had desisted his visits, it was only because he was convinced she desired not the continuance of them.

’Tis possible these words were more galling to the jealous heart of *miss* Flora, than any thing she could have said,
though

though she spoke them with no other intent, than to clear herself of the imputation of having been forsaken; — a thing she looked upon as the worst blemish that could be cast upon her reputation. — Miss Flora finding no more was to be got out of her, took her leave for this time, resolving, however, in her own mind, to keep up an acquaintance with her; that seeming, to her, the most likely way, both to satisfy her curiosity, and prevent any effort of what the extravagance of her passion made her apprehend.

Miss Betsey did not give herself much trouble in reflecting on what miss Flora had said, but as soon as her watch reminded her of the appointed hour, she bid her footman fly and get a chair: — on her coming to the house, mrs. Modely herself opened the door at the first rap, and desired her to walk in. — ‘No, — no,’ said miss Betsey, still sitting in the chair, ‘I cannot stay, — I only called to tell you, that I will have the silver robings put upon the green night-gown, and will buy a new trimming for the pink.’ — ‘I shall be sure to obey your orders, madam,’ replied the other; ‘but I must intreat you will do me the honour

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‘ honour to come in, and drink a dish of
‘ tea, — the kettle boils, and I have just
‘ now had a present of a canister of some
‘ of the finest hyson in the world.’ — ‘ I
‘ must leave you then as soon as I have
‘ tasted it,’ said miss Betsy, coming out
of the chair, ‘ for I have twenty visits
‘ to make this evening.’

She had not been three minutes in the parlour, when the person, for whom all this ceremony was affected, entered the room in somewhat of an abrupt manner, — ‘ I come, mrs. Modely, to complain,’ said he; — ‘ my servants tell me.’ — With these words he stopped short, and fixed his eyes full on miss Betsy, with a kind of astonishment. — Mrs. Modely pretending to be in a great fright, cried, ‘ For heaven’s sake, sir Frederick, what is the matter? — I hope nothing in my house has given your honour any cause of complaint?’ — ‘ No, no, ’tis over now,’ cried he, ‘ your house is become a temple, and this is the divinity that honours it with her presence; — this Græcian Venus.’ — Miss Betsy was too much accustomed to company to be easily abashed, and answered briskly, ‘ if you mean the compliment to me, sir, the Græcian Venus’s are all painted fat,
— ‘ and

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‘ and I have no resemblance of that perfection.’ — ‘ Only in your face, madam,’ returned he; — such sparkling eyes, — such a complexion, — such a mouth; — in your shape you are a Helen of Troy.’ — ‘ That Helen of Troy,’ said miss Betsy, with a satirical smile, ‘ I think was a Græcia princess, and must also be fat, or she would not have been reputed a beauty there.’

The baronet finding by this, he had been guilty of an absurdity, when he intended a fine speech, thought to salve up the matter by saying, ‘ Sure you are Diana then.’ — ‘ Worse and worse,’ cried miss Betsy; — ‘ I beseech you, sir,’ ‘ compare me to no such boisterous goddess, that runs up and down, bare footed and bare leg’d, hunting wild boars in the forest!’ — ‘ What shall I call you then,’ resumed he? — ‘ O! tell me by what name you will be worshipped?’ — ‘ The ladies name, sir Frederick,’ cried mrs. Modely hastily, ‘ is miss Betsy Thoughtless.’ — ‘ Betsy,’ said he? ‘ then Betsy let it be. — Betsy shall henceforth become more famous than Cytherea was of old.

He

He was going on with this fulsome stuff, in which he was often exposed by the ready wit of *miss* Betsy, when a maid belonging to the house came in, and told her, that a gentleman in a hackney coach was at the door, and desired to speak with — ‘With me!’ — cried she, not able to guess who should have followed her there, ‘pray call my foot-
‘man, and bid him ask the person’s
‘name that enquires for me.’ — The maid did as she was ordered, and *miss* Betsy’s servant presently after brought her this intelligence, — ‘Mr. Munden, ma-
‘dam,’ said he, ‘not finding you at
‘home, has taken the liberty to call on
‘you here, in order to conduct you
‘where you are to pass the evening.’ —
‘He must be a happy man, indeed,
‘dare take such liberties,’ cried *sir* Frederick, somewhat fiercely. — ‘Many take
‘more than they are allowed to do,’ said *miss* Betsy. — ‘Go,’ continued she,
‘to the fellow, and tell him, my mind
‘is changed, — that I cannot leave the
‘company I am with, and will not go.’ — Mr. Munden having received this message, ordered the coachman to drive away, very much dissatisfied, as the reader may easily suppose.

Miss Betsy, the day before, had agreed to pass this evening with the ladies at St. James's, and some others, to play at commerce, a game then very much in vogue; — Mr. Munden was to be one of the company, and calling at Miss Betsy's lodgings, in hopes of having some time with her before this meeting, the maid, who had not lived long enough with her mistress to know her humour, presently told him, she was only gone to her mantua-maker's, and gave him directions to the house; he also thinking it no indecorum to call on her at the house of a woman of that profession, had reason enough to be mortified at the rebuff he met with for so doing.

As to Miss Betsy, though she was a little angry at the freedom Mr. Munden had taken, yet she was in reality much more pleased; — and this for two reasons: — first, because she saw it gave her new lover some jealous apprehensions; and, secondly, because it furnished her with a plausible pretence for complying with his entreaties to stay, which she protested, she would not on any terms have been prevailed upon to do, but to prevent either him, or Mrs. Modely, from sus-
pecting

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pecting she would go where mr. Munden
had desired.

Mrs. Modely went out of the room several times, as if called away by some household affairs, that sir Frederick might have an opportunity of declaring his passion to miss Betsy, which he did in much the same rodomontade strain, with which he had at first accosted her. — A handsome supper was served in, after which, she being about to take her leave, he affected to be in a great fret, that a fine new chariot, which, he said, he had bespoke, was not come home, that he might have seen her safe to her lodgings, with an equipage suitable to her merit, and the admiration he had of it: — he would needs, however, attend her in another chair; which piece of gallantry, after a few faint refusals, she accepted.

END of *the* SECOND VOLUME.



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